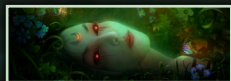


3d artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine

THE HUMAN FACE

The talented **Nykolai Aleksander** concludes her tutorial series on painting the human face by taking elements of what has been taught in the previous two chapters to create this stunning female portrait...



Articles

Utherworlds: An interview with Philip Straub



Interviews

Andrée Wallin & Sven Sauer



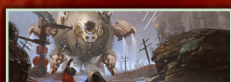
Galleries

Mario Wibisono, Michael Dashow & Soheil Danesh, plus more!



Making Of's

Nastya by Alexander Yazynin



Tutorials

Speed Painting by Justin Albers & Emrah Elmasli, plus more!

Image by Nykolai Aleksander



Editorial

Welcome to the last 2008 issue of 2DArtist Magazine – Issue 036 (not long till the big 4-0 now). This month we have an interview with **Andrée Wallin**, a Swedish born artist currently working in little old England at RealtimeUK. He's been really generous and has provided 2DArtist with some never-before-seen work, so check out **page 007** to find out what inspired Andrée to get into digital painting (or rather, I should say, *who* inspired him) and, more

importantly, to view his stunning portfolio of images – all of which have been created this year. Once Andrée's got your appetite going, cast your hungry eyes over another of our interviews with matte-painter, **Sven Sauer**. We have a range of his art from works created for 3d-io GmbH to his personal (stunning) matte-paintings, so flick to **page 021** to discover a little about this fantastic artist, and how he went from dabbling with FX makeup to the more conceptual side of things for events, films and computer games. And in true 2DArtist fashion, we have yet another wonderful interview – this time with **Philip Straub** (**page 031**). We took some time to speak to Philip about his brand new project, **Utherworlds**, which he's been dying to reveal more about for many months now. So check out **page 031** for the latest from Philip Straub and his fantastic new book and website project.

Our tutorials this month bring together **Justin Albers** and **Emrah Elmasli** in our latest speed painting tutorial, who tackle the brief "The machine was their only means of escape" (**page 075**). Emrah has gone for a colourful homage to English sci-fi painter, John Harris, whilst Justin has taken his interpretation on a different course and had some fun with two of his favourite subjects: machines and robots! For some more sci-fi themed tutorial goodness, turn to **Chee Ming Wong's** latest instalment for the space painting tutorial series (**page 085**). This month he's started the second phase of the series: transport. This first part of the transport section is all about spaceships, and Chee takes us through a traditional approach to concepting before getting stuck into the digital fun! And last but by no means least, and as promised last month, we bring you the final instalment from **Nykolai Aleksander** on painting the human face (**page 101**). This month she brings together the techniques covered in parts 1 and 2 into a final character portrait (this month's cover image), and not only that but she also takes us through the painting of a beautiful dragon tattoo as well as looking at painting brocade. I did promise it would be a good one and it certainly is just that, so do enjoy it!

We have gallery images from **Mario Wibisono**, **Michael Dashow** and **Alex Ruiz**, and our making of article has been written for us by **Alexander Yazynin**, who discusses the creation of a portrait created for a friend as a birthday present (**page 115**). Our challenge also yielded a fantastic number of entries, and the prizes have already been shipped to the top 3. These lovely people are now busying themselves away on making of articles for you, which will be featured next month – along with the results of our current Butcher challenge (expect blood and sausages!).

That's all from us this month. We'll be back with more treats in the New Year. Happy holidays everyone! **Ed.**

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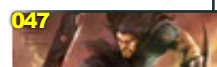
Project Overview by Alexander Yazynin

Palace Entrance

Digital Art Masters: V3 Free Chapter Promotion

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3DTotal.com Ltd Information & Contacts



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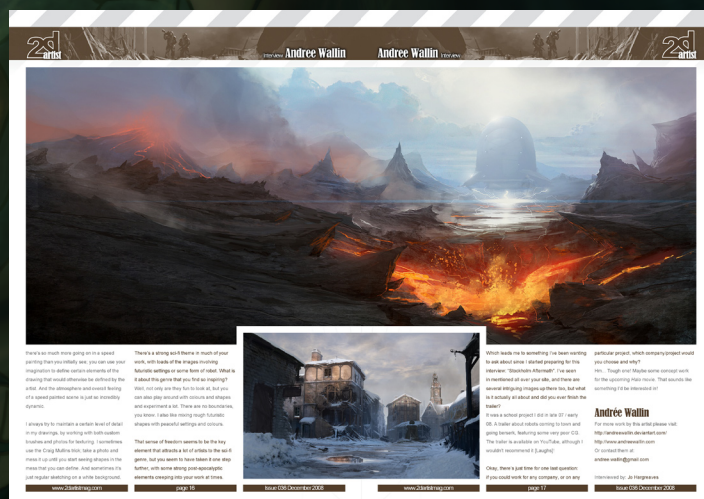
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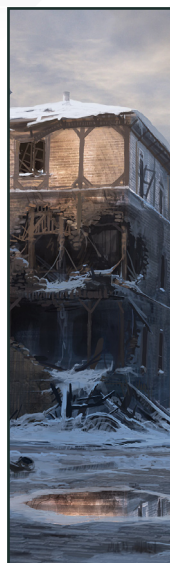
Get the most out of your Magazine!

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Contributing Artists

Every month, many creatives and artists around the world contribute to 3DCreative & 2DArtist Magazine. Here you can read all about them. If you would like to be a part of 3DCreative or 2DArtist Magazines, please contact lynette@zoopublishing



Andree Wallin

25 years old and currently working at RealtimeUK as a matte painter and concept artist. He's addicted to Photoshop, drums, sleeping and travelling; he started studying 3D last year, got a job offer as a 2D artist at Realtime UK and has been working professionally now for about 6 months.

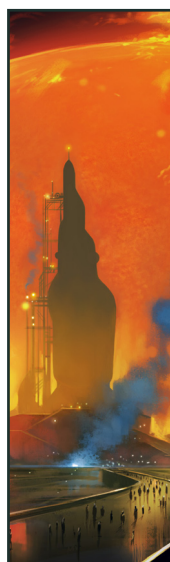
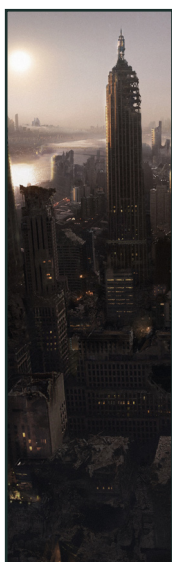
<http://www.andreewallin.com>
andree.wallin@gmail.com



Sven Sauer

A CG artist from Wiesbaden, Germany. He was an art director at an advertising agency before getting into the film and game business. Since 2006, he's been working as a visual developer and matte painting artist, creating styles for feature films.

<http://www.mattepainting-studio.com>
s.sauer@ambivalenz-ltd.com



Emrah Elmashli

A Turkish concept artist based in London, UK. He's working at Lionhead Studios as a full-time senior concept artist. Before coming to the UK, he was a freelance artist living in Istanbul, Turkey and was working for various clients like Crystal Dynamics, Irrational Games, CGToolkit and Fantasy Flight Games, as well as ad agencies. He then found himself in the UK where he draws everyday and enjoys the city in his spare time.

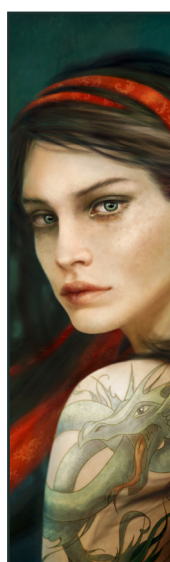
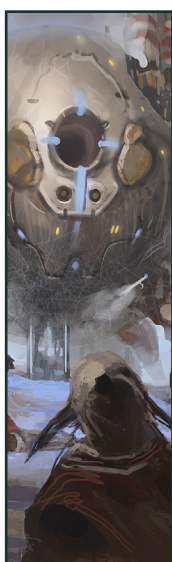
<http://www.partycule.com>
emrah@partycule.com



Justin Albers

A graduate of the Art Institute of Dallas and currently working as a concept artist at Vigil Games on the Warhammer 40,000 MMO in Austin, Texas. His previous companies include TKO Software and NCsoft.

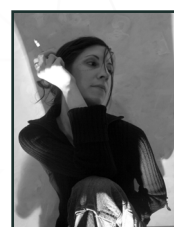
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Nykolai Aleksander

Born in 1978, Nykolai spent the first 17 years of her life in Germany, then moved to England to study A-Level Theatre and Music. She returned to Germany for a short while after, working on film as a set assistant, and in 1999 moved to the UK for good. In 2000 Nykolai started drawing. With the discovery of a Wacom tablet in 2002, her work suddenly took off on a path she hadn't quite expected...

<http://www.admemento.com>
x@admemento.com



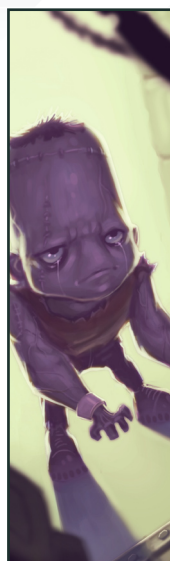


Dr. CM. Wong

Has over 8 years of creative visualisation and pre-production experience, having worked on various independent game projects, publications and CGI pre-production artwork. He is currently the CEO of his own digital art studio, Opus Artz, based in London. Previous work includes his role as Senior Concept Artist and Visual Lead for *Infinity: The Quest for Earth* MMO 2009, plus numerous commercial publications.

<http://www.opusartz.com>

hee@opusartz.com



Patri Balanovsky

Production/Concept Artist from Tel-Aviv, in Israel. He's been drawing & painting since he can remember; creating characters, creatures & fantastic scenes has always been a passion of his. Telling a whole story through a single image can be quite a challenge, but he's always up for it! Keeping his work fresh & versatile, he explores all sorts of genres, styles & attitudes.

<http://chuckmate.blogspot.com>

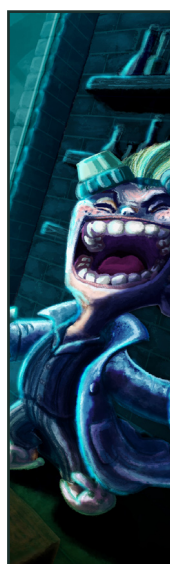
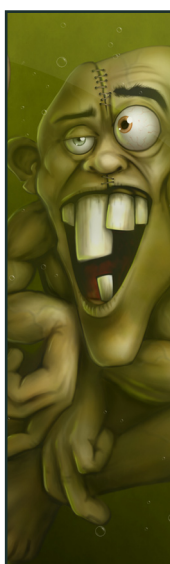
pat2005b@hotmail.com



Pawel Somogyi

An electronics engineer currently working for a telecommunications company, designing circuit boards. To escape from the technical boredom he spends time digital painting and 3D modelling in his free time, and says he currently really needs to finish redesigning the web page he created with his friend. (He also loves cooking.)

pawelsomogyi@gmail.com

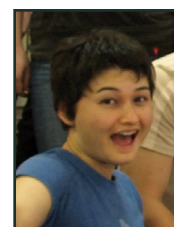


Rosa Hughes

Can peel mandarins really fast, kick a hacksack 32 times, and animates for a living. She currently lives in Brisbane, Australia where she works for a pokies company, leaving little bits of her soul behind in a shower of sparkling gold and glittering teeth. One day she hopes to finish all of the projects she's started over her 23 years.

<http://www.rosatron.com/>

rosatron@gmail.com

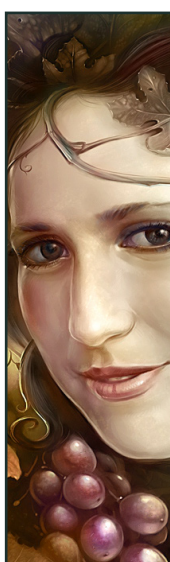


Alexander Yazymin

Graduated Vladivostok College of Art, then the Far Eastern State Academy of Art.

He always wanted to make computer games, and became Elemental Games' company co-founder, which has since developed the *Space Rangers* & *Space Rangers: Dominators* games. The company name was later changed to "Katauri Interactive", where he also worked on the recently released *Kings Bounty: The Legend* game as the art director for three years.

artist@katauri.com



Would You Like To Contribute To 3DCreative Or 2DArtist Magazines?

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ANDRÉE WALLIN

“I started to see that there’s so much more going on in a speed painting than you initially see; you can use your imagination to define certain elements of the drawing that would otherwise be defined by the artist”

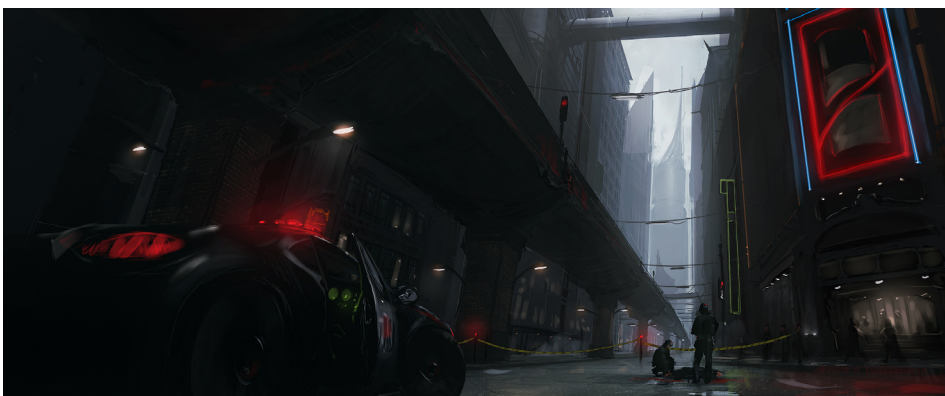
Considering that he only started speed painting back in January 2008, Swedish-born artist Andrée Wallin is already producing some amazing pieces of artwork. We recently took the time to chat to him about his work, why he’s addicted to Photoshop and what his dream project would be.



ANDREE WALLIN

Welcome to 2DArtist, Andrée! Now I've been spending a lot of time on your deviantART page recently (<http://andreewallin.deviantart.com/>), trying to find out more about the man behind the fantastic artwork that's up in the gallery there, but I have to admit I've drawn a bit of a blank. Could you start by telling me (and our readers) who you are, where you came from and how you stumbled into the 2D art arena?

Thank you! My name is Andrée, I'm 25 years old, born in Sweden and currently working in



the UK. I opened Photoshop for the first time at age of 19, I think, after I stumbled upon a tutorial made by the great Dhabih Eng. I kept on drawing occasionally in my spare time, alongside my regular job. Last year I decided to move to Stockholm to study 3D, which turned

out to be the same course that Levente Peterffy was taking. After looking at his work I got really inspired to try some speed painting myself, and so in early January this year I started to make a few speedies and ... here I am! Fortunately for me, Levente is a great guy and has helped me out a lot.



Levente Peterffy, now there's a familiar name for the readers of 2DArtist! He's featured several times in our gallery section recently, and his amazing work was also showcased in *Digital Art Masters: Volume 3* earlier this year. What was it like to be able to learn alongside someone like him?

It's been really great! He still gives me feedback and input on my work on occasion and I'd say that without his help and support I would not be at the level I am today.









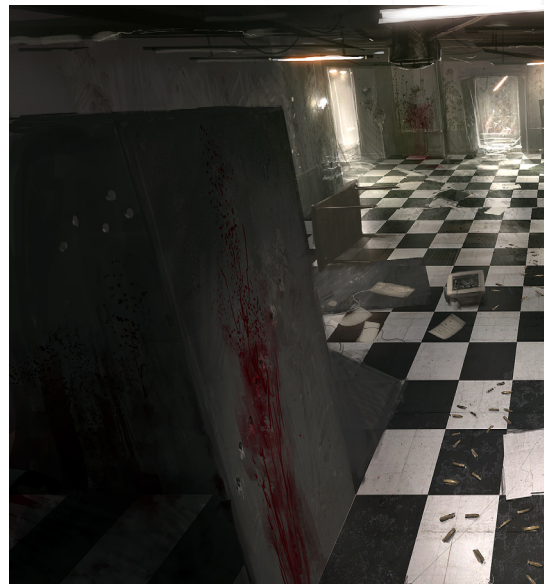
I noticed that you only joined deviantART and CGSociety a little under a year ago. Was this the first time you'd come across these websites? Or simply the first time you'd felt confident enough to put your artwork out there for the world to see?

I had heard about deviantART before, but I never thought my work was good enough for that kind of exposure. So I just kept posting my stuff on a few carefully selected forums instead before I plucked up the courage.

Posting on forums seems to be the classic way for new artists to get their artwork and their name "out there". There's such a great

community of online artists now, all ready to provide feedback and constructive criticism. Was the feedback that you received helpful? And how much did it affect your approach to your own artwork and the decisions that you make?

Of course, most feedback is helpful as long as you really want to progress and get better. But it wasn't until I joined the great speed painting thread at Sijun.com that I understood the power of these art communities/forums. I kept on posting my stuff there until I started getting comments and feedback from these amazing guys I've admired and looked up to for so long, and it was just the best feeling in the world!





Now while I was nosing around your blog, I saw that you describe yourself as a "photoshopaholic". Care to elaborate on that one?

While that statement was intended as a joke, I am pretty addicted to Photoshop since I basically use it 24/7 nowadays. I guess that's pretty sad when you think about it [Laughs]!

Not sad – dedicated! Is Photoshop the main piece of software you use to create your artworks, or do you dabble in others too? And what is it about Photoshop that you find so addictive?

I only use Photoshop really. I tried Painter

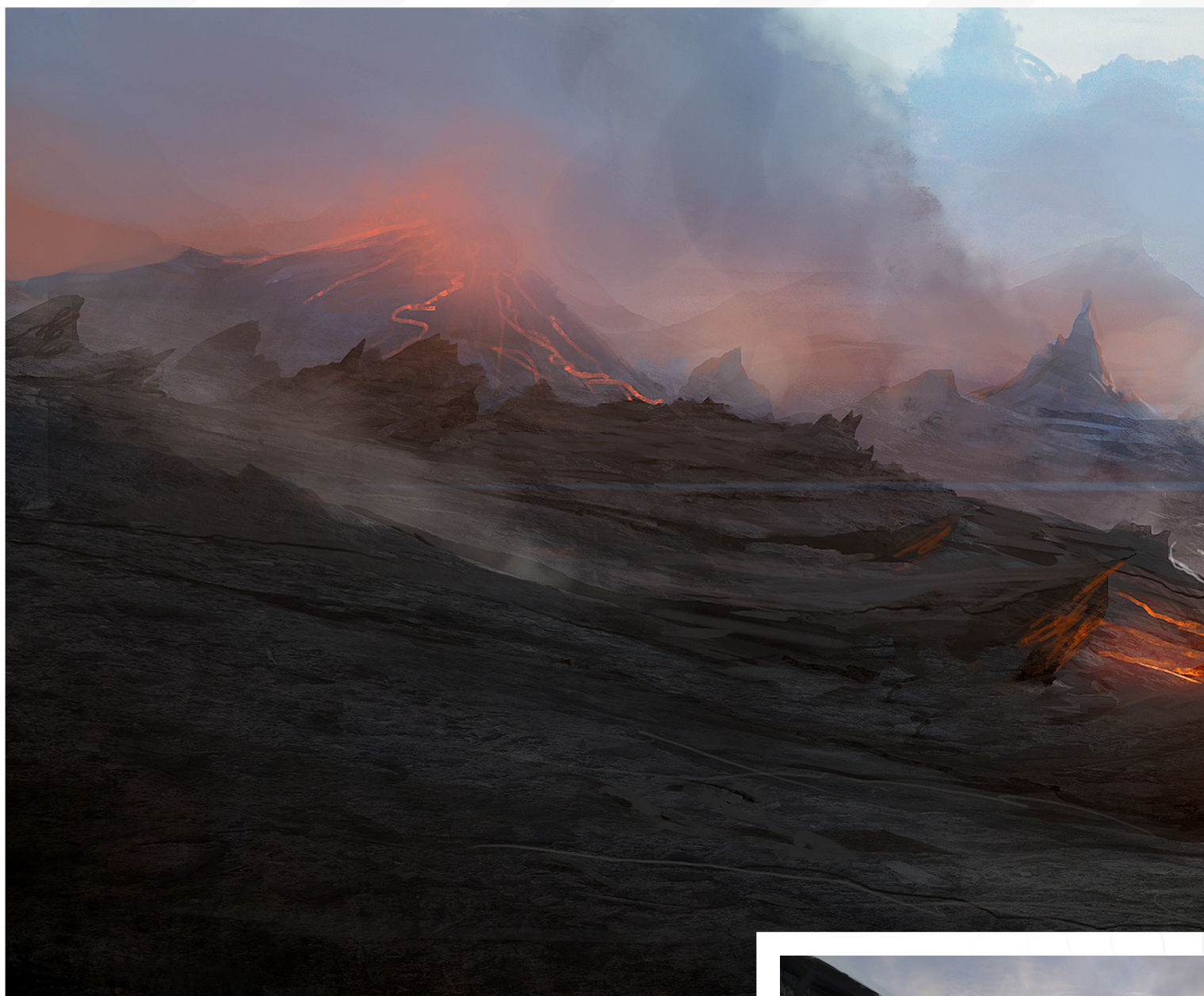
once, but I just can't think of any good reason to switch or alternate between the two. CS3 has everything I need - it's as simple as that!

Okay, seeing as speed paintings take up the majority of your gallery, I just have to ask you about them. Considering how quickly they've all been produced, the quality is consistently amazing. What attracts you to speed paintings? And can you tell us a little bit about the tricks and techniques that you use?

I've always enjoyed more detailed and finished drawings, like the ones of Dan Luvisi (still love his stuff). But as I looked closer at guys like Mullins, Snygg, Cole etc I started to see that







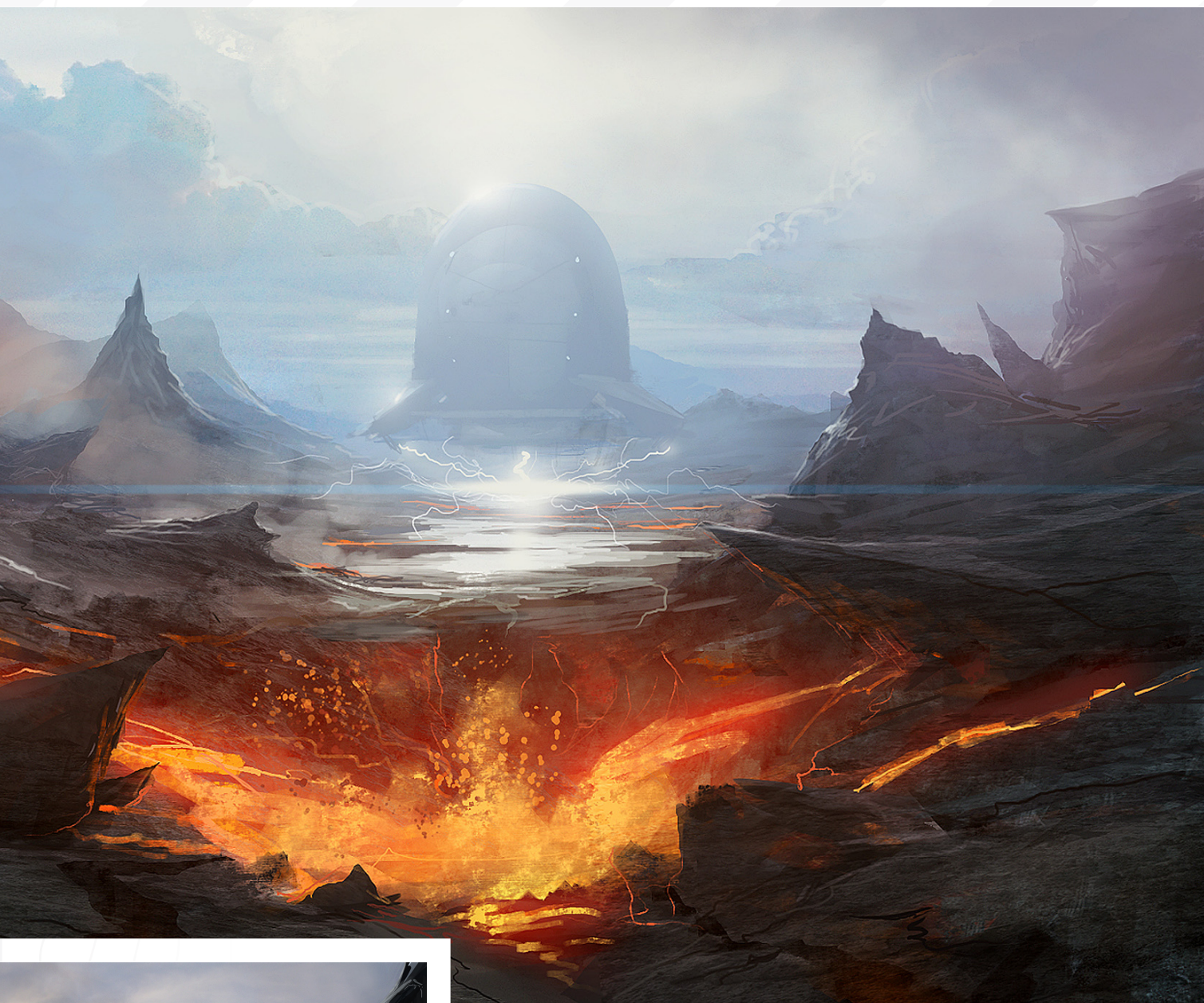
there's so much more going on in a speed painting than you initially see; you can use your imagination to define certain elements of the drawing that would otherwise be defined by the artist. And the atmosphere and overall feeling of a speed painted scene is just so incredibly dynamic.

I always try to maintain a certain level of detail in my drawings, by working with both custom brushes and photos for texturing. I sometimes use the Craig Mullins trick; take a photo and mess it up until you start seeing shapes in the mess that you can define. And sometimes it's just regular sketching on a white background.

There's a strong sci-fi theme in much of your work, with loads of the images involving futuristic settings or some form of robot. What is it about this genre that you find so inspiring? Well, not only are they fun to look at, but you can also play around with colours and shapes and experiment a lot. There are no boundaries, you know. I also like mixing rough futuristic shapes with peaceful settings and colours.

That sense of freedom seems to be the key element that attracts a lot of artists to the sci-fi genre, but you seem to have taken it one step further, with some strong post-apocalyptic elements creeping into your work at times.





Which leads me to something I've been wanting to ask about since I started preparing for this interview: "Stockholm Aftermath". I've seen in mentioned all over your site, and there are several intriguing images up there too, but what is it actually all about and did you ever finish the trailer?

It was a school project I did in late 07 / early 08. A trailer about robots coming to town and going berserk, featuring some very poor CG. The trailer is available on YouTube, although I wouldn't recommend it [Laughs]!

Okay, there's just time for one last question: if you could work for any company, or on any

particular project, which company/project would you choose and why?

Hm... Tough one! Maybe some concept work for the upcoming *Halo* movie. That sounds like something I'd be interested in!

Andrée Wallin

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://andreewallin.deviantart.com/>

<http://www.andreewallin.com>

Or contact them at:

andree.wallin@gmail.com

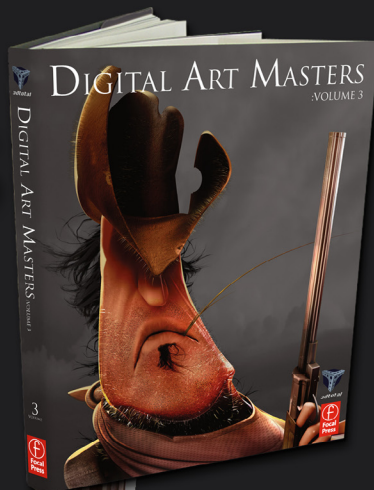
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"Over the years, I was drawn more and more into the conceptual work. We developed mechanisms and stage-tools to more effectively scare the living hell out of the visitors"

SVEN SAUER

From learning FX make-up at the annual "Halloween-Festival", to being the Director of Visual Development for DMPA, we chat with matte painter Sven Sauer about how he got into art, and his latest work on the adventure game *Perry Rhodan*.

**SVEN
SAUER**

Hi Sven, could you tell us a little bit about yourself and also how you got into art?

I can't really pick out one certain point in my life when I got interested in design. I guess it's just personal interests that drive you in a certain direction; what really interests us - that's what we're good at. And what we are good at - that's what's easy for us. So, to a certain degree, I owe my decisions to the fact that I just wanted to take the easy way out ... [Laughs].

You've covered a lot in the early stages of your career, from FX make-up, through interactive design to matte painting. So having "dipped your toe" into all these different areas, do you feel you've grown as an artist?

I grew up with the works of Tom Savini (make-up artist on *From Dusk till Dawn* etc.). It was pure coincidence though, that brought me to the annual "Halloween-Festival" at the "real"



Frankenstein Castle (yes, Mary Shelly's novel was named after this site!) At this horror event I learned the basics of FX make-up. What an exciting time it was! Over the years, I was drawn more and more into the conceptual work. We developed mechanisms and stage-tools to more effectively scare the living hell out of the visitors. Eventually, the dramaturgy of the event lead me to films. And from there, it was just a short step to becoming a matte painting artist. You see, the multitude of things I've done so far are not that different from each other really. What it all comes down to is the conceptual staging - no matter if for events, films or computer games.

So have you attended any "Halloween-Festivals" recently?

The season begins again soon. Even in Europe, Halloween has become a fixed part of the festival season. Every year new events spring



up, all trying to come up with innovative and creative ways to scare people. It's cool to see that the borders between computer games and live events are vanishing bit by bit, thanks to the playful multimedia elements that are being integrated into events. For example: we're working on a tracking system that monitors the movements of visitors and has them followed by digitally projected spiders. Many of the ideas like that derive from the gaming industry, but are slowly becoming separate from the screen and finding their ways into our real environment. I can't wait to see what surprises will be waiting for us out there this year...

In the "about" section of your website (<http://www.mattepainting-studio.com>) it states that you're a member of 3D-IO. For the readers out there that are unfamiliar with this, could you fill us in on what it is and what you do?

3D-IO and Ambivalenz are two firms that perfectly complement each other, thanks to their different core competencies. 3D-IO has ten years of experience in game development; Ambivalenz is focused on interactive design and

movie postproduction. Both markets have grown closer together over the years and therefore 3D-IO and Ambivalenz have developed a strong partnership, which has resulted in a group of 2D and 3D artists working hand in hand.



You have currently done a lot of matte paintings for an adventure game called *Perry Rhodan*. Could you tell us a bit about the brief that your where given in order to create this images? And how long did you spend on the project?

The production stage of the Perry Rhodan game took about two years. I got to know 3D-IO's owner Igor Posavec during the pre-production phase, which turned out to take up way more time than expected. The whole Perry Rhodan series has been around since 1961, and is made up of more than 2000 novels, which makes it the biggest sci-fi series in the world. So as you can imagine, we were presented with this mass of information in our briefing, which we then had to try and sort through. And the later development of any given element was closely supervised by the thousands of eyes of a large fan community.

I didn't actually start out with the formal production of matte paintings. Teamed up with Igor, I developed the game's visual concept - the guidelines to ensure that each artwork derived from the same visual scheme and perfectly fitted the plot. I had to answer questions like:

- How does colour influence the mood of the player?
- Which colour is "treason"?
- Which visual analogies will announce a change in the plot?

At that point, I strongly benefited from my Halloween-Festival experiences!

While I'm not too familiar with the Perry Rhodan universe, the visuals that you created certainly make it look very interesting. Do you feel that the work that you've done on the game does this sci-fi series justice, and what has the feedback from the fans been like?

We've been working closely together with the fan community, and the references from the first graphic developments of the 1960s, which feature a Buck Rogers kind of charm. While this material was great, it really needed rejuvenating to bring it more up-to-date. This turned out to be somewhat of a tightrope walk, as we aimed to please the old-school Perry fans as much as the newer, younger gamers. Space gliders had to be fitted with different transmission shafts

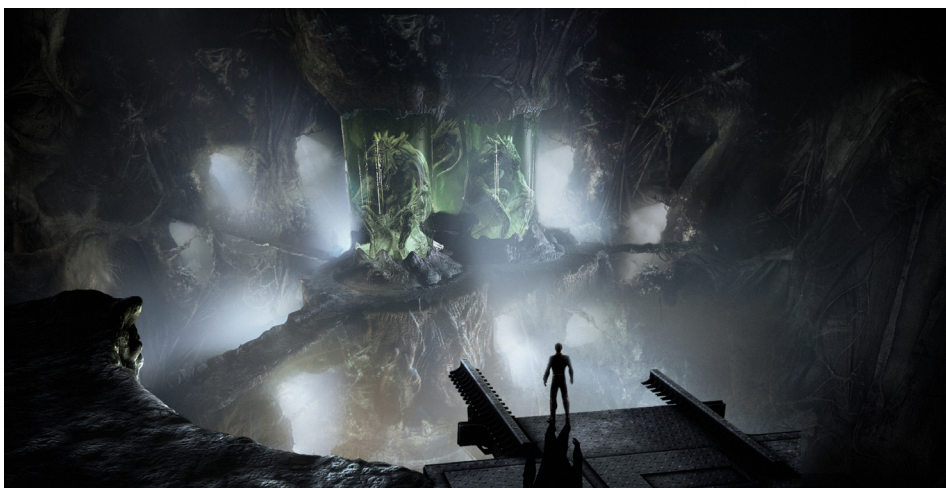




halfway through the development process, after the fans showed their concern about the basic technical requirements. Almost every single element of the game universe had already been documented in quite detailed sketches over the last 50 years, and we had to respect that. Our own vision for the project was strictly shaped by these existing requirements. Igor was right when he compared the Perry Rhodan universe to "Open-Source" developments: you may bring in your own ideas - as long as you play by the rules. Working with the fans often resulted in time-consuming discussions, but at the same time, it got the community really hyped up for the release date. Fortunately, the feedback from the first tests showed that we'd managed to get things right!

So now that you're the Director of Visual Development for DMPA, where do you see your career heading, and what would you like to be doing in five years time?

Again, it's my personal interests that drive me on. Visual development becomes more and more the focus of our work each day.



We consult with directors and production companies, where picture-language will contribute to a given storyline. Psychology is certainly a big factor. Certain images, past experiences - they all trigger hidden emotions in every one of us, e.g. "smoke towering above NYC" or "tanks on Tiananmen Square". To find and unravel these layers of analogies and to recombine them in new ways - that's fascinating.

Waking, going to the cinema or relaxing with family, these are some of the ways that the artists we have interviewed like to spend the time away from the computer screen. So what are the key things that you look forward to doing when you get the chance?

"Thrill junkie" - maybe that's a good term to describe me in my spare time. There are so many sports to take part in, film festivals to attend and so on. One major advantage of my job is that we create the footage for our matte paintings ourselves. Travelling to the places you have in mind for your next project - couldn't miss out on that, could I? [Laughs].

Your latest pieces of work entitled "Sundust Particles" depicts the remains of a futuristic city. Could you tell us a bit about this project and your involvement in it?

Sundust is an apocalyptic love story. After a plane carrying biological weapons crashed close to a little village on the coastline, most of its inhabitants died and the few survivors were evacuated. The director Patrick Fröhlich consulted with us early on in the production to develop an emotional opener for the film. I was inspired by the big blackout in Canada and the US in 2004. I happened to witness the incident by chance, as I was visiting Toronto at the time. The entire city was pitch-black, except for a few single headlights; I felt surrounded by a ghost city. Based on that experience, for Sundust we created a "dying city", withering like a plant. The upper floors of the skyscrapers have already faded; only the lower parts are still filled with life.



The colour range and lighting of the shots are more real than they might appear at first sight. The reference material came from a photo shoot in Shanghai. There are a lot of bizarre places in the world - you just have to put them into a new context. Shanghai for me is "cyberpunk" come real, making it the perfect raw material for showing a fading city.

Well it has been a real pleasure talking with you Sven, and I wish you all the best for the future. One last question before we wrap things up: what one film would you have like to have produced matte-paintings for and why?

I'm still waiting for a filmmaker daring enough to produce William Gibson's *Newromancer*. That would definitely be very exciting. The same is true for China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station*. Two books that really make me dream...

Sven Sauer

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://www.mattepainting-studio.com/>

Or contact them at:

s.sauer@ambivalenz-ltd.com

Interviewed by: Chris Perrins





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“...it's a book about
dreams and nightmares
and how conscious and
unconscious thought is all
connected to the overall
balance of the universe.”

Utherworlds

an interview with Philip Straub

Renowned artist
Philip Straub has
enlightened our lives
with his amazing
imagery. We take
a look at his latest
venture and delve
into the world of
Utherworlds.



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Hi, Philip. Now it's been over a year since 2DArtist interviewed you and by the looks of it, a lot has changed in that time; Chairman/Founder of Unity Entertainment and the massive new project you're working on: *Utherworlds*. Well we'll talk more about *Utherworlds* in a moment, but first can you tell us more about Unity Entertainment and what your goals are? Yeah - wow time does fly by, doesn't it? [Laughs]. I formed Unity Entertainment around my two intellectual properties, *Utherworlds* and *Secret Places*. Both properties have branded merchandise already out in the marketplace, but I wanted to add a much larger mythology and story to them so that they could be delivered

Interview with Philip Straub *Utherworlds*

in some of the new media channels available today. Development of these properties required additional employees and cash flow so a company umbrella made sense. So, Unity was formed as a canvas for the development of the properties into new media channels.

There are already tons of shoot 'em up games out there, tons of sports games, and lots of the same gameplay being regurgitated over and

over out there. Now, many of these games are lots of fun and very well made, but I'm more interested in creating something with an uplifting storyline that delivers a positive message in the end – or, at the very least, an experience that triggers an individual to think after gameplay is done.

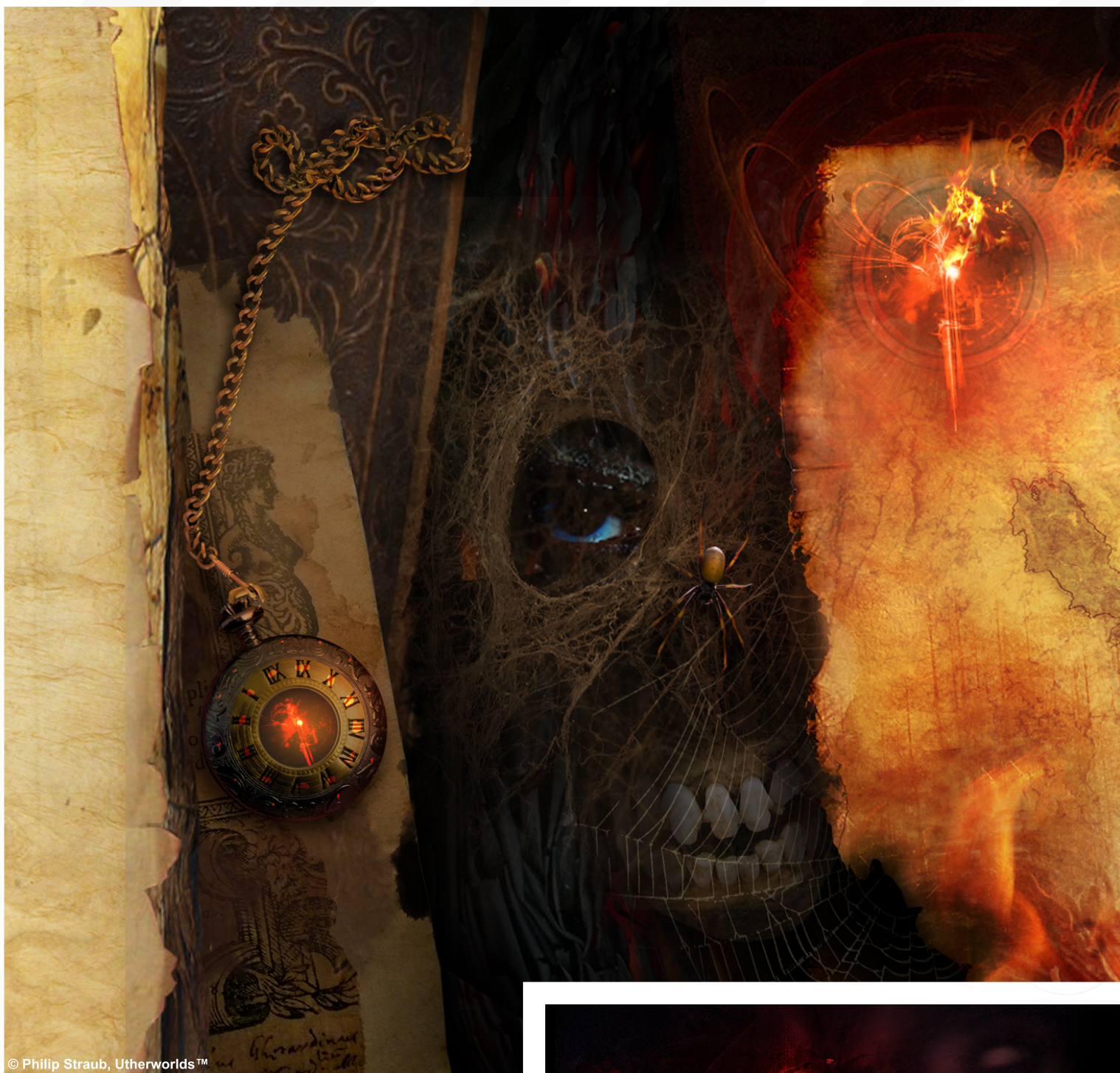
Utherworlds is your latest project, and you're planning on releasing the first book early next year. Could you tell us the idea behind this and also can you give us a brief overview of *Utherworlds*?

Certainly - it's a book about dreams and nightmares and how conscious and unconscious thought is all connected to the overall balance of the universe. The book boasts 70+ illustrations, an original novel of approximately 60,000 words, two unique written languages, an original spoken language, and a selection of maps detailing the territories. The book is actually the diary of the main character, Lucas Sellers and it details his travels in the Nightmare and Dream Realms. He's returned from the Realms to warn Earth that humans must change their desire for



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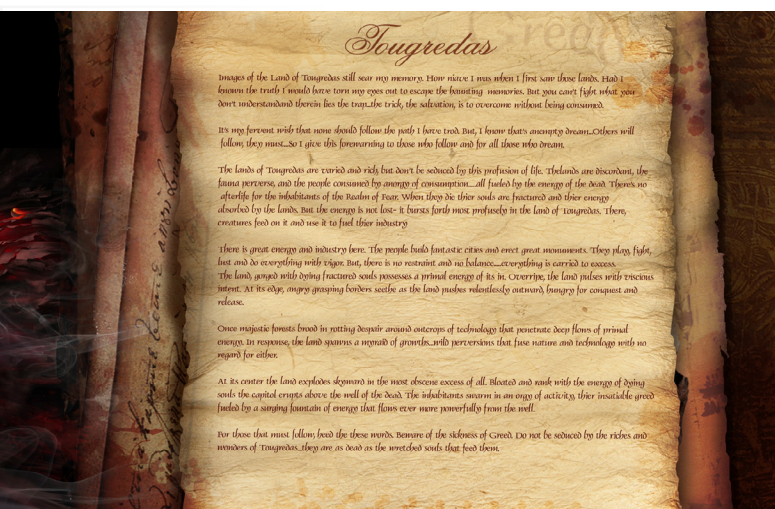
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lust, greed and hate, or else the universe will lose their dreams and the concepts of hope and love along with them.

The storyline back-story is as follows: Lucas is a well-known and respected freelance journalist living in the heart of Los Angeles. He is an influential creative figure with vast connections within the entertainment industries, the political landscape, and big business. A once positive, hopeful, and loving family man, Lucas spirals into depression when his family disappears while he is on an assignment to uncover the global effects of war, greed, and climate change. His unique abilities to influence



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millions with his writing and dire personal situation propels him to the Realms with no memory of who he was or how he got there.

He falls into the middle of the greatest conflict the universe has ever seen, with the Realms of Dreams and Nightmares acting as ground zero. Through Aadyasha, an unlikely companion in the Realms, with a secret intertwined with his own, Lucas eventually rediscovers his true being. As Lucas journeys through the Realms of Nightmares and Dreams he remembers there is still good in him, that he can love, and there is hope in finding his wife and child. He learns he has the gift to write in the sacred

language of Dreams and, with it, the ability to change the tides of war in the favour of the Dream Realm. Ultimately, Lucas realizes that all Utherworlds (earth and the rest of the planets with sentient life in the universe) are equally real and linked – and that he can make a decisive difference for the better. But Lucas is forced to make an impossible choice between retrieving his lost wife and child or playing an important role in the defence of all living creatures.

The framework for the mythology is the following: All thought is alive – each hope, fear, and memory is a part of the whole we call the universe. Every living creature contributes in their own unique way to the balance of positive and negative energy in the world. Just beyond human consciousness there is a place where all dreams and desires exist, a world where unconscious thought dwells and flourishes. Virtually invisible to human perception and beyond our physical reality resides the splendour and malevolence of every thought ever imagined. This relatively unknown world is an expanding emotional manifestation that survives through its symbiotic relationship with the creatures that support it. As long as there has been life, these visualisations and manifestations have existed in delicate balance with the universe, continually evolving with the passing of time.

But, the balance has shifted and the natural order has been disrupted. Sentient beings have lost their way and have given into the temptation of negative thought. Hope, empathy, and truth are being challenged by the growing forces of greed, hatred, and lust. War, global climate change, and industrialisation grow with each passing day unchecked. It is true - the universe has reached a tipping point. A time of no return is nearly upon us all. Those who are open – those with true presence and a belief in hope - are called upon to reclaim and restore the balance.





So the story charts Lucas's journey as he strives to help Lealinnia restore the balance. What can we expect to see from Lucas and how will his character evolve?

Well, without giving too much away, his character evolves quite a bit over the course of the story. Keep in mind that when he arrives in the Realms, he remembers nothing of who he once was, so he is trying to survive, understand what kind of man he is, remember his past, and understand how all this intertwines with his future. The more he remembers about his past, the more he becomes drawn into the conflicts of the Realms. And, the more he remembers, the more dire the situation becomes around him and on Earth.

This instalment of the story is only part of a much larger story – so some things will be resolved at the conclusion of this book, while other aspects of the story are still unravelling as I write this. The website will keep the story moving until Lucas is able to communicate the next chapter to the world. Keep in mind, we can all make a difference and change the fate of the universe – Lucas cannot do it alone.

With the first book being only a part of a larger story, how many books are you planning and how will they be structured? For example *The Lord of the Rings* was a trilogy, with each book having it's own standalone title. Will you go down a similar route or try something new?

Good question! Currently I've mapped out a total of three stories with some aspects of the journey concluding at the close of the third, but *Utherworlds* could easily go the way of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, with five, six or even seven books. In addition, since there are missing pages from the journal (the journal is essentially the first book) of the lead character Lucas, I've been toying around with the idea of building a graphic novel of sorts around that. And, of course, there is the back story and prequel which I had to write to develop



everything and then eventually scrap because of lack of space. It will really depend on how the book and website do - if people like the story then I'm quite sure I'll continue to build the property out.

As you've just mentioned, as well as the book you also have a website planned for *Utherworlds*. How will the website enhance the user's/reader's experience?

The book acts as a chronicle of Lucas's journey and an insight on the visuals of the Realms. The reader gets to see what Lucas saw and read about his experiences in the Realms. The book is part field guide, part traditional novel, and part graphic novel. Too my knowledge, there is nothing out there in the marketplace right now.

The website however, is a supplemental field guide experience that delves much deeper in the mythology surrounding *Utherworlds*. Users that do not own the book can enjoy the site as a standalone entity but, those who have the book will learn more about the mythology. The site uncovers in detail the different character types, the different locations in the lands and combines this with interactivity, animation and sound.

All together my team has created over 15 minutes of animated content. Mark Stefanowicz, a friend and colleague from EA and Vivendi Universal, has been at the helm of most of the animated content and flash infrastructure. He has worked tirelessly to help get this project off the ground and is an amazing talent. The animation approach to the site is quite unique and the site design is very "creative." There are some subtle things we're doing that are not what is seen on most mainstream websites, even in the entertainment industries. In addition I collaborated with well known composer, Alan

Hewitt, to create the soundtrack which is used throughout the website in different ways to enhance the consumer experience.

I'm calling all of the above stage 1 of the development for the site- we have a stage 2 planned that will deliver what I think is a very unique and original multimedia experience. It increases the interactivity of stage 1 quite a bit and nearly doubles the size of the site. New music, new animated content, games, storyline developments are all included in this plan. We just need to take it one step at a time.









I want to talk about the game side of *Utherworlds* and the MMO. With games such as *Warhammer: Age of Reckoning* and *World of Warcraft* dominating the market, how will your game differ from these and what new elements will it offer in order to entice gamers to enter *Utherworlds*?

There are a bunch of new things that we have planned for the game(s). All of these things are long-term goals right now, since I only have so much time in the day and the book and website is taking up all of it. But, the delivery of content across multiple media formats will allow the user to experience the *Utherworlds* property in a new way... a way that is connected to day to day life.

The *Utherworlds* PC/console game would not fall into the typical MMO space. I think the current MMO space is actually quite crowded and I don't know if there are that many more consumers out there that are willing to invest the amount of time a typical MMO requires. The plan is to combine social networking, casual MMO concepts, and interactivity so that the user can choose how much time they want to invest. If the user wants to become fully engaged in the mythology then it is there for them - however, if they only want to only invest 5-10 minutes then they will have that opportunity too. I know I'm being vague here but, I don't want to give too much away.

Having chosen to create this link between the books and website, in order to enhance the reader's experience, are you planning on having a similar aspect to the game where the player must consult the book/website for help?

But, of course! Who could resist that?

[Laughs]. Every aspect of *Utherworlds* will be a standalone experience and also a part of



© Philip Straub, Utherworlds™

the bigger puzzle. I've been looking at utilising the two secret languages I've developed for the story, producing tarot cards applying the mythology or trading cards - the list goes on. Stay tuned!

You have so many wondrous and adventurous things planned for *Utherworlds* already, but I hear that you're also thinking about feature films. How do you think the world of *Utherworlds* will translate to film considering the complex environments and characters?

Thank you! I've already completed a film treatment for the *Utherworlds* story. I've pitched the treatment to a few folks here in Hollywood

and the response has been really positive. I think the story will translate quite well and as I've been writing and illustrating the book and website content, I've always kept the film in mind. The only thing that will probably hold the film back from being produced is the large budget that would be required to fully realise the vision. *Utherworlds* is without a doubt a 100+ million dollar film and until the product has been proven through book sales, website traffic, merchandise and game sales, the deals we're likely to see in the film space will not be attractive. So, the idea is to build the IP out slowly but surely, and hope that people are interested in it and enjoy it.



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Thankfully, my philosophy around *Utherworlds* is to simply produce a good story that will hopefully change the way people see the world. Even if I only affect a few people in a positive way, then that's enough for me. That is my goal, I want to put something good out in the world... Lucas's message must be heard.

Do you think it would lend itself better to being a CGI film or would you go down the live action route?

I've been asked this question a lot. I personally see *Utherworlds* as a live-action film - this is always how I've visualised it. It might be because I want to see the characters in the story

truly come to life and the worlds made real. I think bringing these worlds, based on human emotions, in all their realistic glory would be a pretty incredible sight. But, as I've said, I think the budget for a live-action *Utherworlds* film would be over 100 million, so it could be that an animated adaptation might work - it all depends on what components might come together to make the project find the big screen.

Well it has been a pleasure talking with you Philip and I wish you all the best and I look forward to reading the book.

Thank you, Sir - I'm looking forward to seeing it all come together too!

Philip Straub

For more information please visit:

<http://www.philipstraub.com>

Or contact:

straubart@aol.com

Article courtesy: Chris Perrins

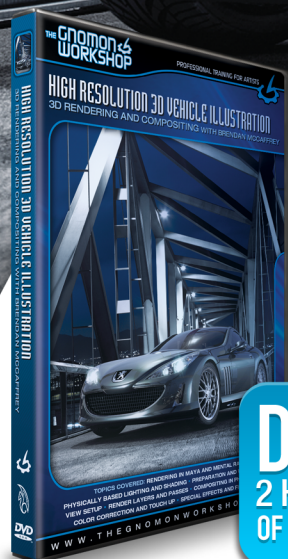




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THE GALLERY

This month we feature:

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Mario Wibisono

Michael Dashow

Ömür Özgür

Soheil Danesh

Minjuan Zhong

Ejiwa A. Ebenebe

Dmitry Mitsuk

Alex Ruiz

Jose Alves da Silva



Trainwreck Falls

Alex Ruiz

<http://tarrzan.deviantart.com/>

ziurx@earthlink.net



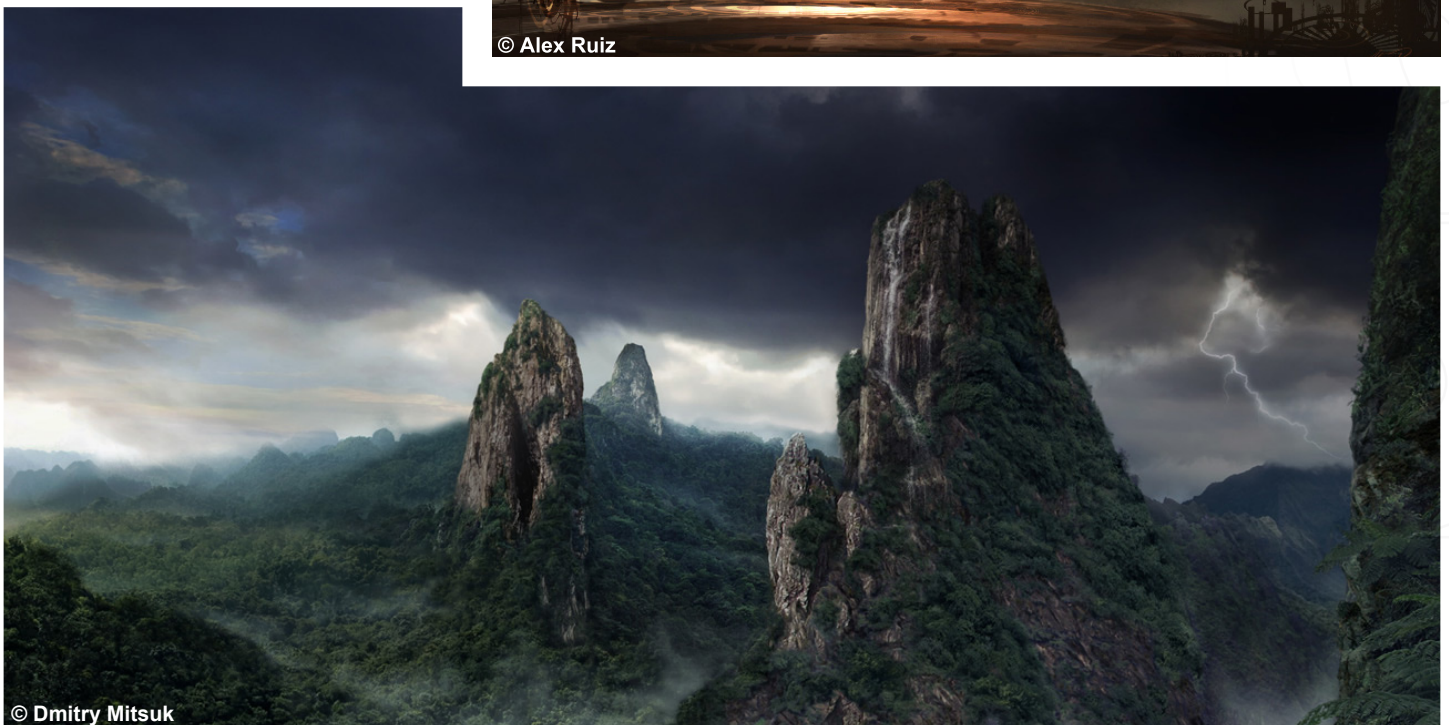
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Thunderstorm

Dmitry Mitsuk

<http://mitsuk.cgsociety.org/gallery/>

mitsuk2003@list.ru



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Superstar

Mario Wibisono

<http://raynkazuya.cgsociety.org>

raynkazuya@yahoo.com

Pepper character copyright Stanley Lau



Artwork © Mario Wibisono. Pepper Character © Stanley Lau

Cargo

Ömür Özgür

<http://www.omurozgur.net>

omurozgur@gmail.com





Beautiful Girl

Mingjuan Zhong

309262953@qq.com



© Mingjuan Zhong



Mr. Reaper

Jose Alves da Silva

joalvessilva@netcabo.pt

Adorable Alien

Michael Dashow

<http://www.michaeldashow.com>

mdashow@michaeldashow.com



Circus Act

Anne-marie Hugot

<http://sachan.ultra-book.com/>

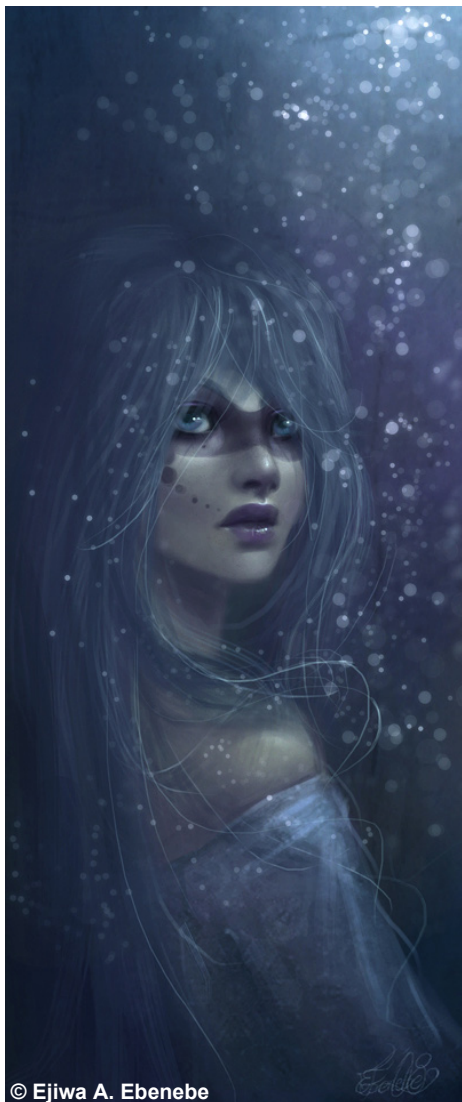
amhugot@free.fr

Snowfall

Ejiwa A. Ebenebe

<http://peppermint-pinwheel.deviantart.com>

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© Anne-marie Hugot

Soushiant

Soheil Danesh

<http://danesh.cgsociety.org>

soheildan@gmail.com



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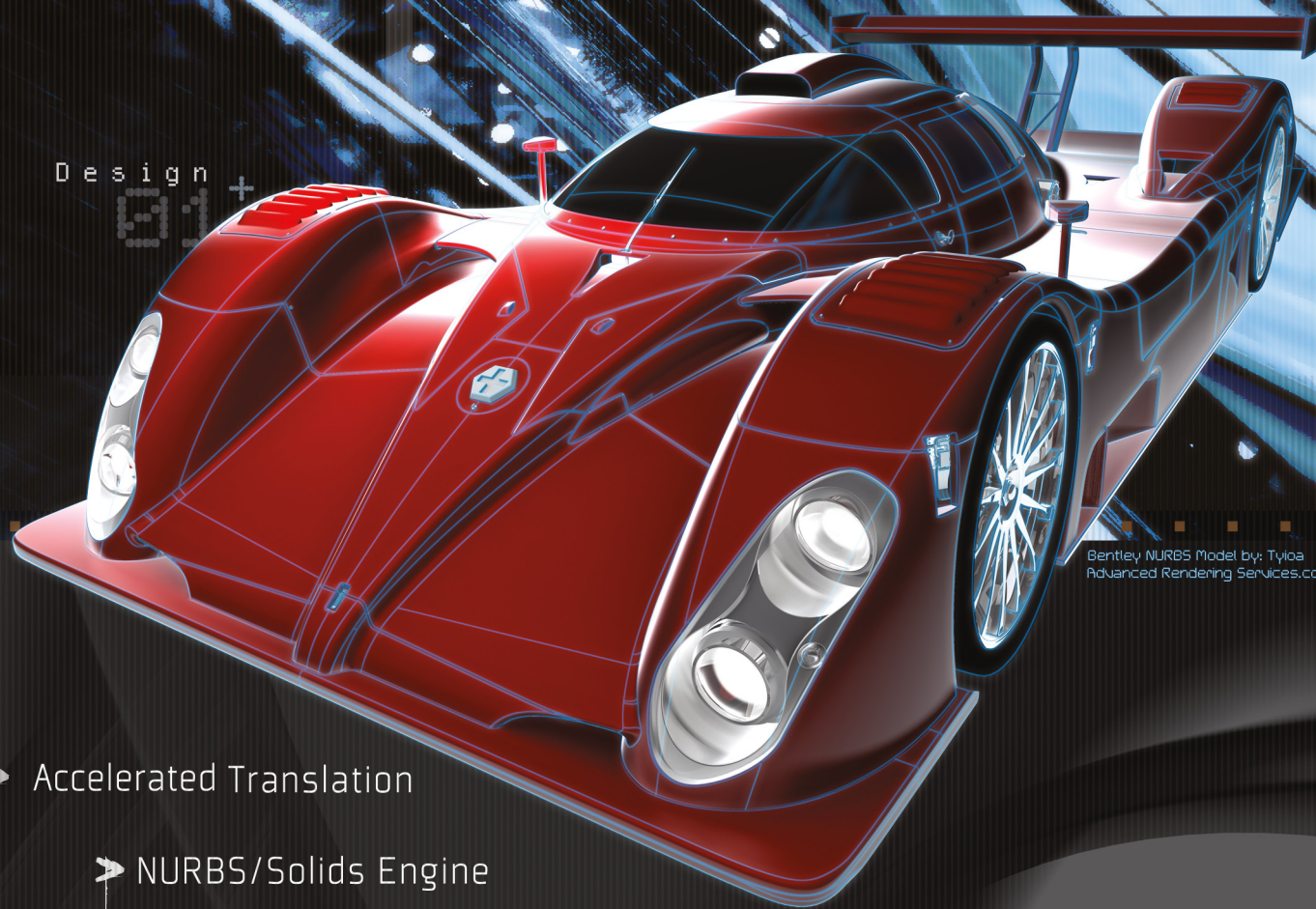
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the

2DA challenge

Welcome to the "Challenge" section of 2DArtist. Every month we run a challenge in the conceptart.org forums, which is available for anyone to enter. The winning entries not only receive prizes from the www.3dtotal.com shop, but also get featured in this very magazine! And as well as displaying the winners from the previous month's competition, we also showcase the "Making Of's" from the month before that, so you can see how these winning pieces of artwork were created.

Scarecrow

Stylised Challenge



Stylised Challenge

Scarecrow

The Challenge

Welcome to the Super Stylised Monthly Challenge. Each month we will select an theme and post some images in the **Forum Thread** as reference. All you have to do is to create a 2D image in line with this theme in a stylised / abstract / cartoon style, whilst keeping your image instantly recognisable. We wanted to publish some content in 2DArtist Magazine on how to create stylised images, such as you see in the many feature films and cartoon galleries.

9th



Katie Babkoff - Kit1
ktbabkoff@gmail.com
<http://kit1.deviantart.com>

8th



Marcus Welbey

10th



Richard G.D. Baker - The Antarctic
cirqus@cirqus.com
<http://www.cirqus.com>

9th



Char Reed - CharReed
char.reed@gmail.com
<http://www.charartist.com>

10th



Rosatron

9th



Ramazan Aykilic - Brather
raykilic@hotmail.com
<http://brather.cgsociety.org>

We thought this regular competition might bring in just the images / Making Of's that we need, whilst giving away great prizes and exposure. This month's theme was **"Scarecrow"**. Here you can see the top placed entries, as voted for by the public.

What are we looking for?

Funny and humorous entries which break the theme down to its most recognisable components; emphasise these in whichever

ways you think best, and render your stylised / abstract / cartoon masterpiece. The rules are pretty laid back: please submit 1 x 3D render (minor post work is OK); its up to you if you want to have a background; include some graphical elements or text on your image. Renders of the 800 pixel dimension sound about right, but the winners will be featured in 2DArtist Magazine, so if you can create some higher res images too then all the better!

7th



Urih pla2

6th



Freddydark

4th



Fedezz

5th



Adrian Zhang - Gnahz
adrian.zhangzhiwei@gmail.com
<http://gnahz.deviantart.com/>

5th



Tom Svoboda - Smot
smot@smot.cz
<http://www.smot.cz>

There will be one competition per month, with the deadline being the end of the month (GMT). For a valid entry, just make sure your final image is posted in the main competition

thread before the deadline. We require the top three winners to submit "Making Of" overview articles that will be shown on either 3DTotal or in 2DArtist Magazine. These need to show the

4th



Entroid

stages of your creation - different elements and some brief explanation text - of why, and how, you did what you did. We will format this into some nice-looking pages to give you some great exposure, and us some quality content. Each competition will have one main thread which starts with the brief at the top. All entrants should post all WIP's, give feedback and generally laugh at the crazy ideas that are emerging each month...

Challenge Thread

The entire **Scarecrow** competition can be viewed [Here](#)

The current challenge at the voting stage is: **Butcher**

The current challenge taking place is: **Troll**

To join the next challenge, or to view previous, and / or current entries, please visit: www.conceptart.org

Or contact: Lynette@zoopublishing.com

3rd



Felipe Fernández Morell - Bstsk
contactos@ffilustracion.com
<http://www.ffilustracion.com>

2nd



Robert L. Cron - Madhatter106
robert@costumesketch.com
<http://www.costumesketch.com/>

1st



Ruth Martinez - Ruth2m
ruth2m@gmail.com
<http://ruth2m.com>

Frankenstein making of's

3rd Rosatron

Concept

Coming up with the idea for a Frankenstein picture was easy. Whenever I'm stuck for ideas on what to do for a themed picture, I just think of a version of the character that I'd be interested in watching a TV show about. Maniacal children make me laugh, which led to the idea of a kid doing experiments in his bedroom on a teddy bear.

Step 01

I did a horrible little sketch in my work notebook to get a general feel for his character (**Fig.01**), and then scowled at it for ten minutes, trying to figure out how I could make it good.

Step 02

I really liked the idea of dramatic (or melodramatic) camera angles and lighting, except that my perspective is dodgy at best. So I turned to my ugly friend, 3ds Max, to help me out with the composition. I constructed a basic room and characters out of basic boxes, using nothing fancy or complicated. I used mostly boxes instead of spheres, as I find the obvious

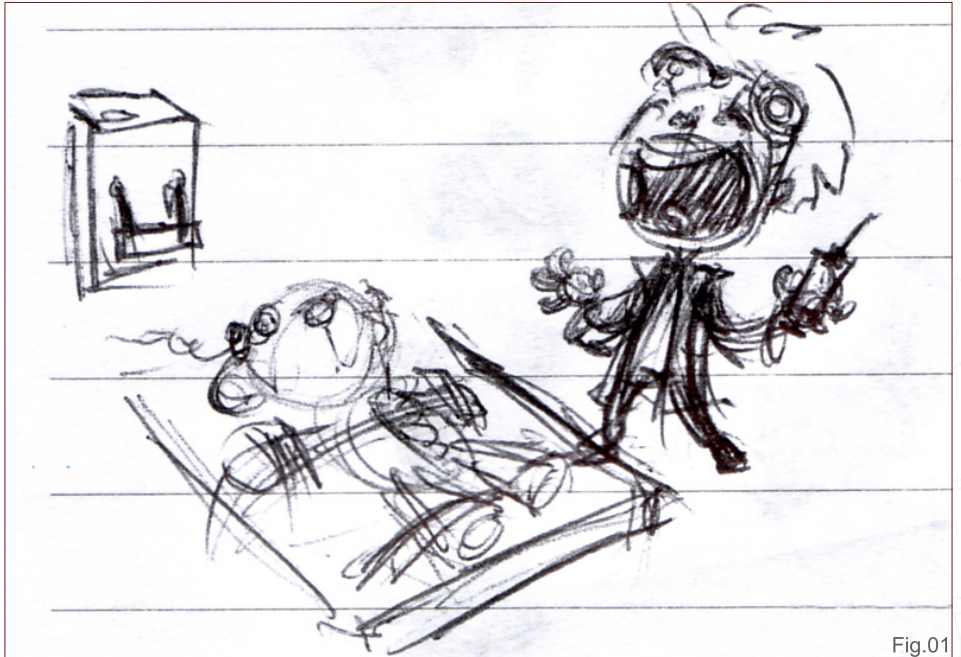


Fig.01

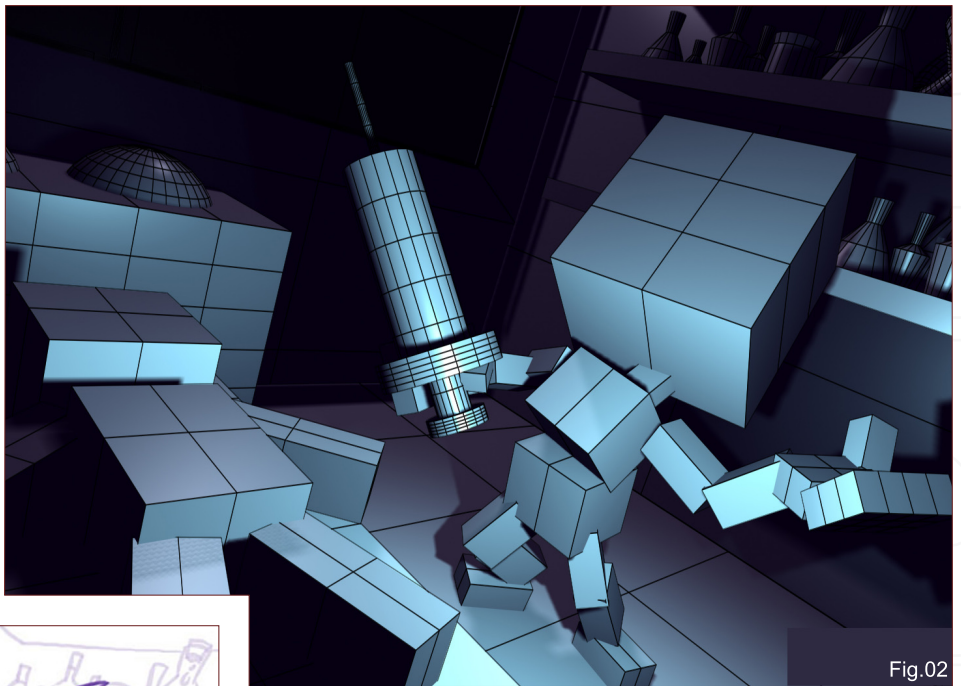


Fig.02



Fig.03

change of plane easier to sketch over. I chucked a camera in the scene, moving it around until I found a shot I generally liked. I threw some lights in for fun and rendered out the scene. To render out my wire lines over the top, I had to collapse the whole scene into a group, duplicate it, and add a push modifier onto the scene copy. With this modifier and a wire material applied, I was able to render out my basic shapes along with a pushed out wire frame sitting just over the top (**Fig.02**). This is especially handy for perspective lines and just makes the whole thing easier to sketch over.

Step 03

Using my 3D render as a base, I sketched over it in Photoshop to get my rough line work down (**Fig.03**). I got some feedback from some fellow

ConceptArtisans (thanks very much) to extend my canvas, as it was looking a bit cramped. I took this on board and did a re-render from 3ds Max to get some extra information for the background. Then I went back to Photoshop to paint in some tone. This helped me get a further sense of the composition, which I felt had gotten lost after staring at just line art and blank white for so long.

Step 04 & 05

After painting in my rough shadows and highlights (**Fig.04**), I threw in my flat colour under my shadow layer. I set my line art's blending mode to linear burn with 60%, opacity so it would receive the colour beneath it instead of just being a flat purple. I find this is a gloriously lazy and easily adjustable way to create coloured lines if you don't need something too perfect. I cleaned up my shadow layer and also set it to linear burn (fill 70%) and mucked around with the hue and saturation until I found something I was pretty happy with (**Fig.05**).

Step 06

I was ready for rendering and making it all painterly now. I could've refined it more and gone for a cell-shaded look, but I needed the painting practise,



Fig.04

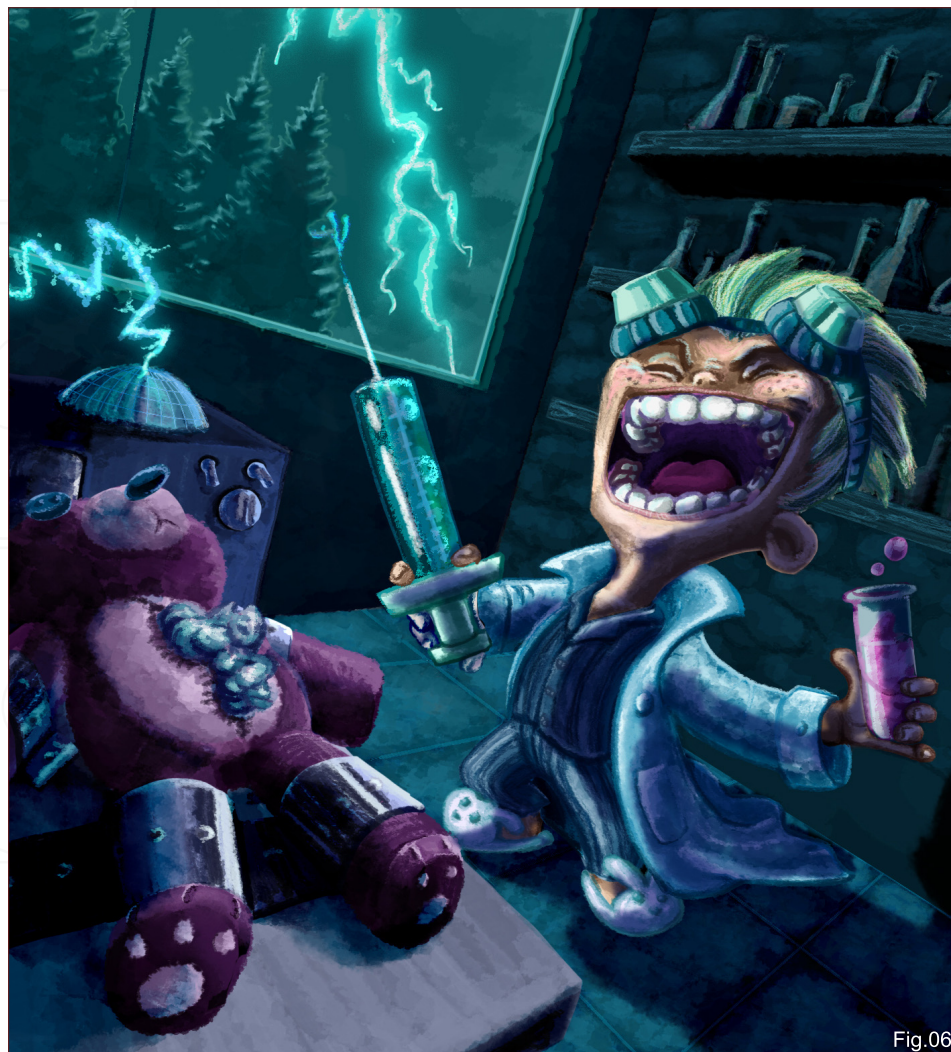


Fig.06



Fig.05

and so I used a hard chalky brush and worked on the bear first, enjoying the textured, muddy feel of the brush I was using (**Fig.06**). I kept switching from my bear to the general shadow layer, sometimes cutting bits out of the shadow layer to merge into other layers where its general blending mode wasn't working for me. In retrospect I think I should've experimented

with different brush types for different areas of the picture, instead of just using the same hard chalky one just because I liked its feel.

Step 07

During the painting stage I like to throw textures down for extra detail. I always add layer masks to my textures, and unlink the mask from its layer so that I can move my texture around all over my object. This was especially handy for the brick walls and the table, where I needed to free transform the texture to make it match the room's perspective. I sketched in a grid pattern over my bear layer to make it look more knitted, and then fiddled around with the blending modes and added some scratchiness to make the textures roll with the rest of the picture. When a layer has a special blending mode, I usually like to change a layer's fill in favour of

its opacity. There's a big difference between the two and it's not just to do with layer effects (Fig.07).

Step 08

With the picture in its final stages, it was time for final colour and lighting tweaks. I threw an outer glow on my lightning, and added in some extra bright blue rim lighting (everybody loves rim lighting, it dramatises and prettifies everything), and showed it to my co-workers. They made me check its values, said the kid's skin was differently lit to the rest of the picture, and suggested giving the bear more 'pop'. I think it's always good to get other opinions, unless you're feeling exceptionally fragile that day. So I gave the kid more contrast with extra shadows, changed his skin hue, and added in some more extra shadows and lights (Fig.08).

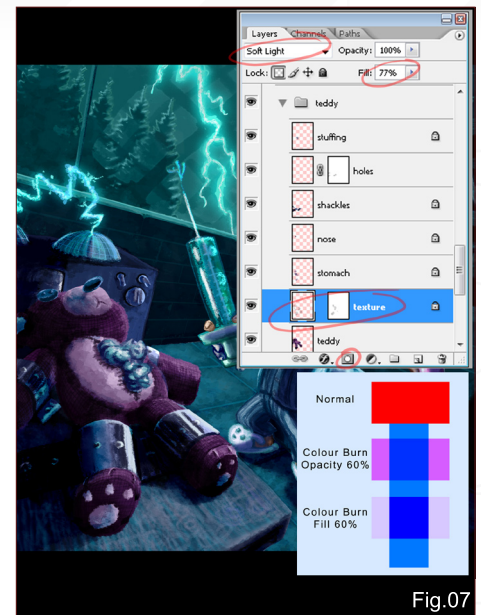


Fig.07

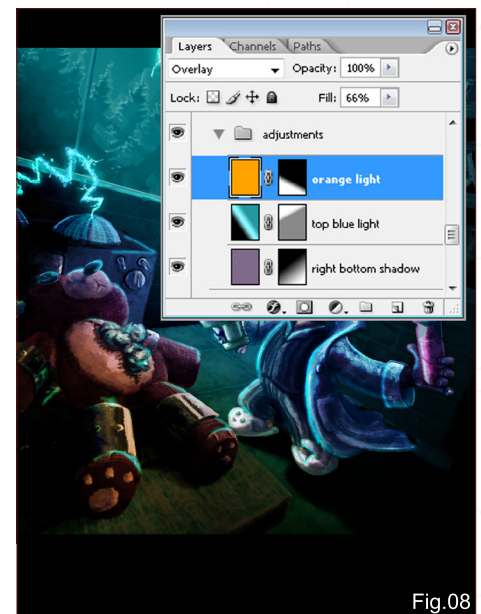


Fig.08



Fig.09

Final

And then it was finished (Fig.09) – well, finished enough for my animator's attention span anyway. Looking back, it probably could've used more detailing and refining, but it was a fun piece to work on and I'm pretty happy with it.

Rosa Hughes

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2nd Paweu

Introduction

I'll start off with a few words about the software I used for this artwork. I always hear of people using either Photoshop or Painter in regards to 2D graphics; in 3D it's usually Maya or 3ds Max, and for vector art everybody seems to be using Corel Draw or Adobe Illustrator. Being the rebel that I am, I use open source software instead: GIMP, Blender and Inkscape. These three programmes have evolved over the years, so much so that they can really compete with their commercial rivals – on many levels. I'm not saying that they are better, because they most certainly lack some useful tools, but they are very good alternatives for guys that don't have too much free cash (yes, they're free), and also it's really fun to see how they change with every new release, with more and more new options each time.

So let's now get onto the creation of the picture. The basic idea was to combine the two parts of the subject into one. I wanted to make a Frankenstein's monster that hadn't turned out too well. The first thing I thought about was the face; I think my mind was wandering towards Mel Brooks's *Young Frankenstein*, but rather



Fig.02

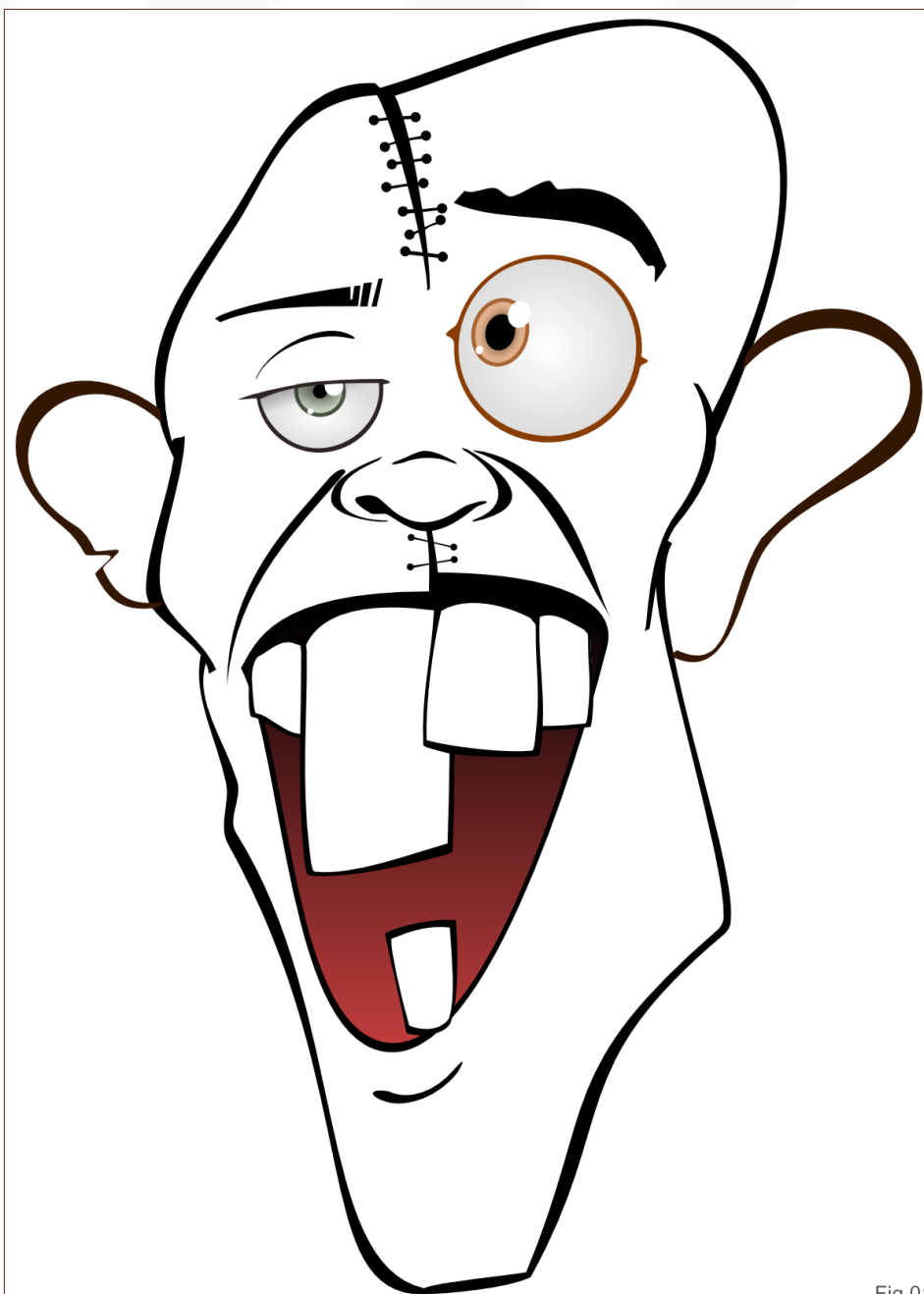


Fig.01

than the monster I was thinking more of Marty Feldman's crazy eyes. I wanted the monster to look wacky, and eyes like that would certainly do the trick!

Step 1

I usually start by sketching some ideas with a pencil, or directly in GIMP with a tablet, but this time I made the sketch of the character's head as vector graphics in Inkscape (Fig.01). There wasn't any real reason for this; I just wanted to play with the programme a bit. I focused mainly on the eyes; I wanted them to look like they'd

been extracted from a Pixar flick. The face was supposed to be distorted and crazy, but not really scary.

Step 2

I was quite happy with the face, so it was time to think about the whole picture. I thought that, if this was a failed experiment, then it would mean the monster hadn't come to life. In that case, the monster would probably end up in a glass container –filled with formaldehyde or something like that – and so that was what I wanted to draw.

I opened the face sketch in GIMP and coloured it roughly. I then added the background layer and coloured it green – it just felt like the right colour for the picture. After setting this up, I started to sketch the body (on a new layer again). I wanted him to be cramped in a small space. The monster would have to be naked, but I didn't want to invade his privacy too much. That's how I ended up with this pose (**Fig.02**).

Step 3

The sketch looked okay, so it was time to make it a little more precise. I made a new layer and drew the outlines. I didn't focus on the quality of the lines as I didn't intend to keep them in the



Fig.03



Fig.04



Fig.05

final picture. But it was a really important part of the work, because it was the last moment when I could fix everything easily. It's always very frustrating for me to find some huge mistakes too late and end up repainting huge chunks of a nearly finished picture to make it right, so I tried to make it right at this stage. I mirrored the picture a few times and fixed everything that seemed off. I then added the colour to the body and the mouth, and for the first time, I could see this guy as a whole character (**Fig.03**).

Step 4

This was when the real fun started! This step took probably the most time, but it flew by so fast that I didn't even notice. I merged all the layers, except the background, and just kept painting over until I was happy with it (**Fig.04**). I didn't add any new colours, just painted the values to bring out the form as well as I could. At this stage I painted with one light source in mind.

Step 5

The picture started to look too dark, so I tweaked the contrast and brightness a little (**Fig.05**). The gradient in the background didn't look too good, so I added a texture to it. You can see what I did in **Fig.06**. I used a filter called "Plasma Clouds" on a new layer – it created a

nice noisy texture. I didn't want the colours, so I desaturated it. I then set the layer to Overlay, and the new background was done.

I also added some colour variations to the skin of the monster. I created the selection from an alpha channel so I didn't have to worry about keeping everything inside the shape, then created a new layer again and painted some random patches of yellow, green and pale red. I also set this layer to Overlay and decreased the opacity to 50%, because I didn't want it to be too strong. You can see how it works in **Fig.07**.

Step 6

In this step I added some green highlights to make the lighting more interesting. I also wanted to make the liquid look muddier, so I duplicated the background layer, brought this copy to the front and decreased the opacity to 40%. I picked the Eraser tool, a large fuzzy brush and erased this layer in places that I wanted to be more visible – the face and those parts most in front.



Fig.08

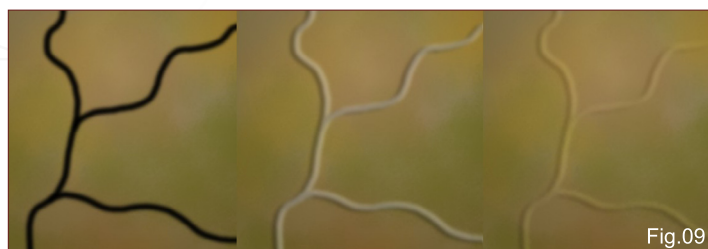


Fig.09

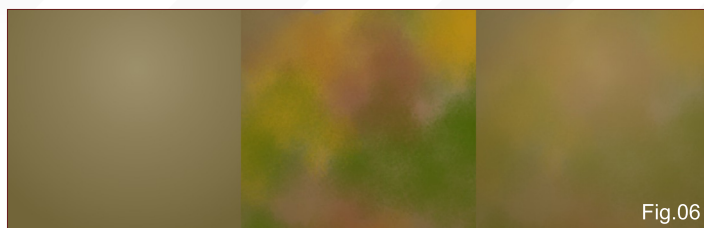


Fig.06



Fig.07

The character was almost finished here, so it was time to paint the container he was in. I painted the walls, added parts of reflections on the sides and bubbles (I painted one bubble, copied it and then used it as a brush because I'm lazy). I then painted a surface and a label. To finish it off, I added the delicate white reflection (**Fig.08**).

Step 7

The picture was pretty much done at this point. All I did here was add some details. The veins were done very quickly: on a new layer I painted black lines with a fuzzy brush. I then duplicated this layer and inverted the colour to make it white. I decreased the opacity of both layers, merged them together and set it to Overlay (**Fig.09**). The eyes seemed flat and too bright, so I shaded them a little more. Finally, I gave a few touches to the teeth and fingers and the picture was done.

Pawel Somogyi

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SPECIMEN XIII

1st Chuck, mate

Step 1

I started off by roughly sketching my character.

As a rule for character design, I try and give as much personality and life to my design as I possibly can; I'm looking for a story behind the facial features, the body language, and so on. There's nothing sadder than a wonderfully rendered guy that has no expression, no story to tell, no life in him.

For this piece, I was going for a child-like rendition of a Frankenstein-type monster, who's somewhat lost and perhaps also confused and misunderstood – a Frankenstein teenager if you will (only without the rotten attitude). I drew in my character's environment, which helped to further enhance the story telling, and it also grounded my character, so he wasn't just floating in midair (**Fig.01**).

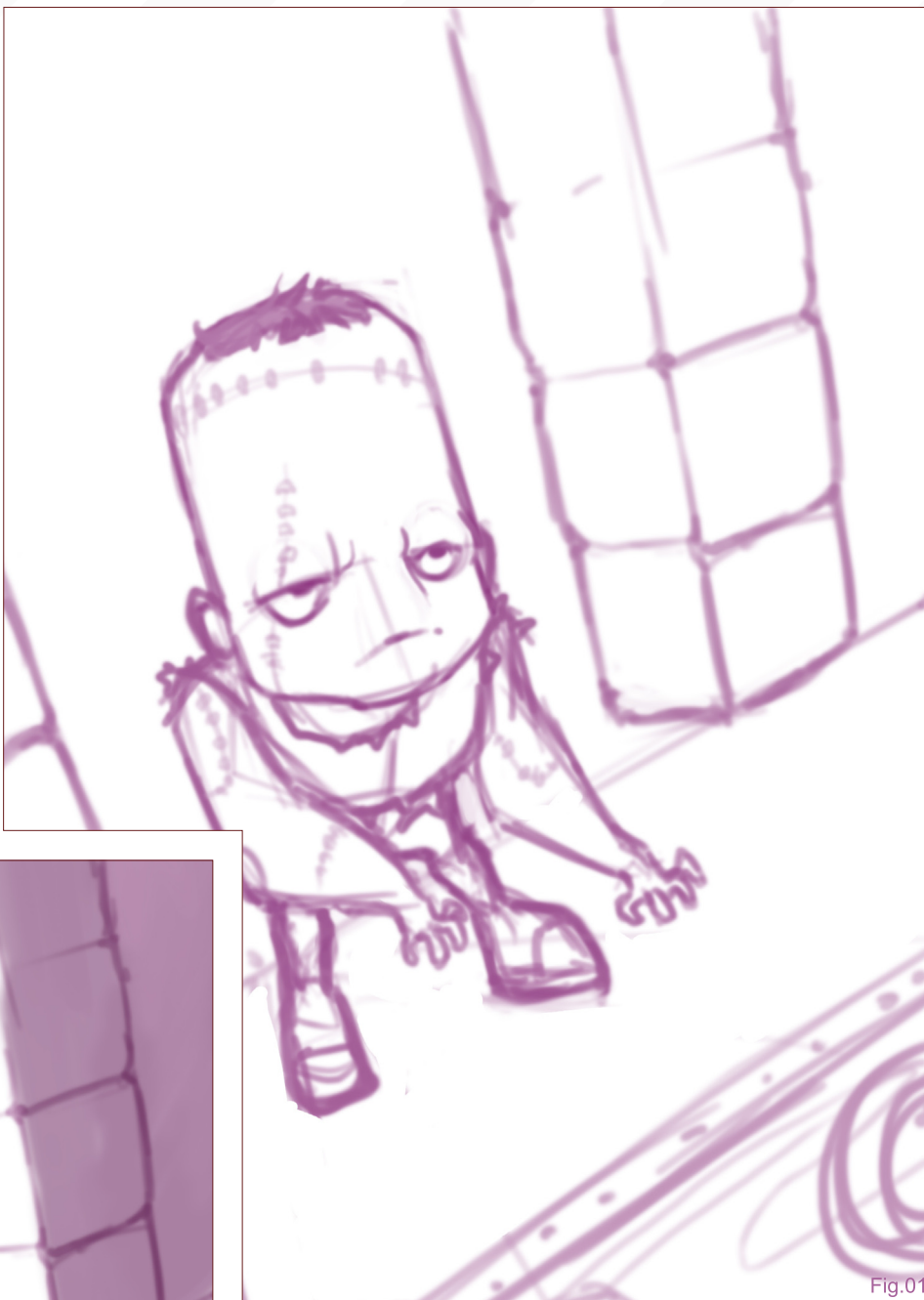


Fig.01



Fig.02

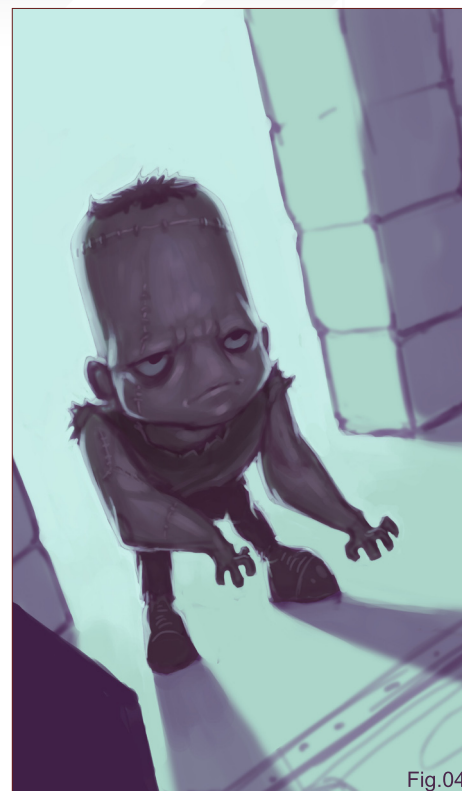
Thinking of my light source from the get go, I drew in a door – an open passage behind the guy – so that it would serve as a light source coming from behind, which in contrast left most of this sad, misshapen creature in the dark. I doodled some more shapes there, just to balance the composition a bit. I still wasn't sure at this stage what everything would be.

Step 2

On a new layer set to Multiply, I roughly painted in a mid tone, dropping some shadows and allowing shapes and forms to start to take their place. I painted quickly, just hinting at what was to come in regards to smaller shapes and details in the features of my character's face and arms. I kept it monochromatic at this point, using the same greyish purple for my rough sketch (**Fig.02**).

Step 3

I dropped a cold green on top using a Multiply layer, just to introduce a new colour to the piece and to darken the whole image. This way I gave myself more material to work with when carving shapes, forms and surfaces out from dark to light. You can also see that I started painting the light coming from the giant doorway towering above my main character, allowing me to finely define the edges and overall silhouette of Frankie (Fig.03).

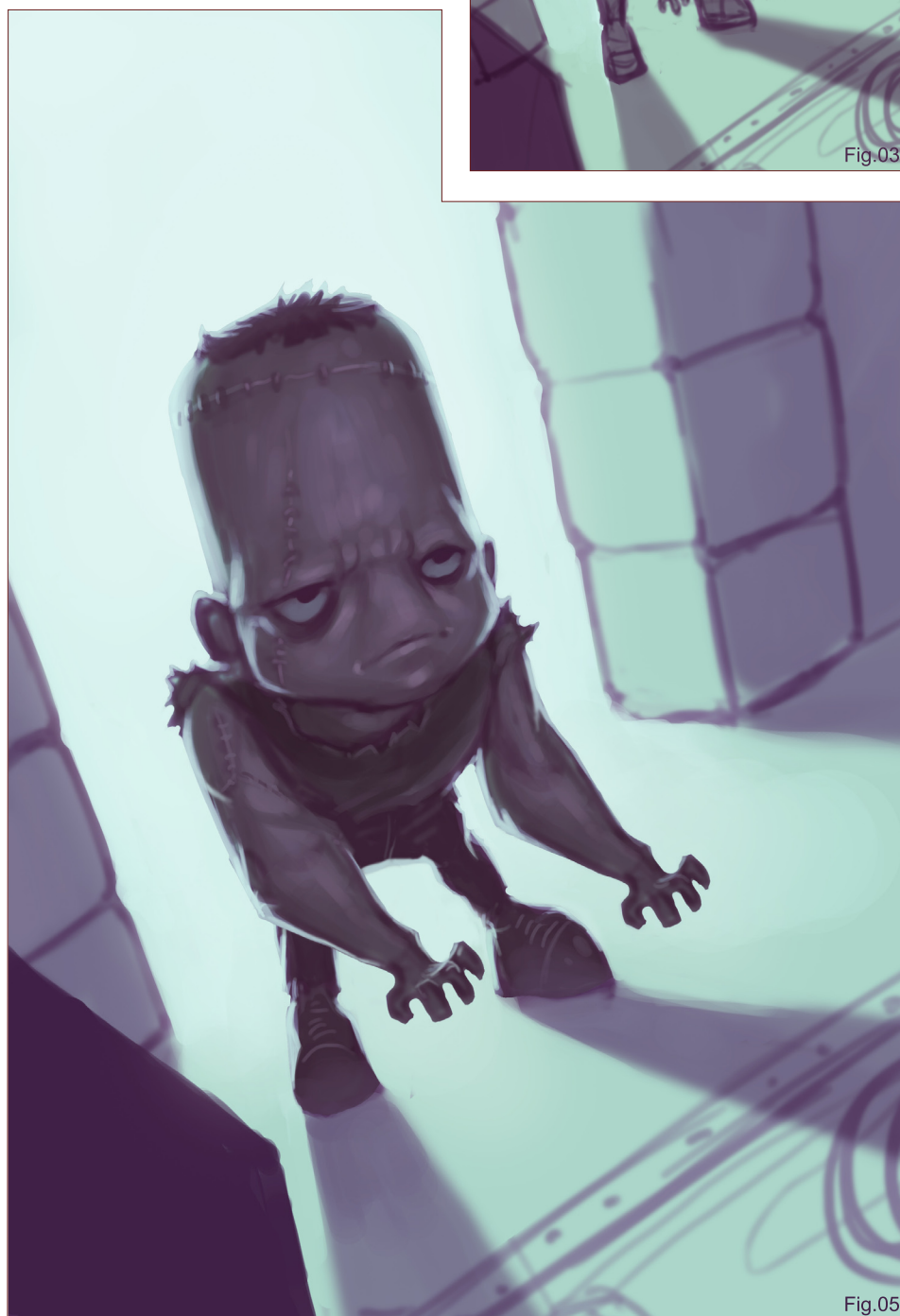


Step 4

At this point, I was mostly done with the rendering of the character, in terms of volume, lighting, shapes and values. The main light source, being a back light, didn't mean I had to lose any of the detail from the face and body, so I painted in details like scars, seams, wrinkles, folds and creases, using a "global" lighting coming from the room itself, bouncing off the floor, walls, and so on. I also painted more of the light source coming from the door, defining the heavy stone lintels from both sides. I blocked in a dark shape in the bottom left corner, just to add some depth to the scene, and even at this point I still wasn't sure what that was going to be (Fig.04).

Step 5

At this stage you can see that I wasn't pleased with the way Frankie's right arm was coming along, so I painted in a new one, matching it much better with the left arm in both size and shape (Fig.05). I also added an even brighter colour to the light coming from the door in the background, further contrasting the main figure, making him 'pop out' slightly more.



Step 6

Here I painted in the stone lintels, adding details like grooves and notches, making them grittier and giving them their proper light and shade – relying again on where I decided my main light source was coming from and the secondary light sources, bouncing off the surroundings. I used an Overlay yellowish colour layer on top of my image to crank up the contrast of my image a notch, and to give the bright areas of the picture more of a vivid look; less manufactured, a boring colour – more of a vibrant warm colour. I lowered this layer's opacity to about 40%, so it blended nicely with my image as a whole. I then erased out the shaded area from this layer, to bring back some of the dark and moody purples of it (**Fig.06**).

Final

This stage was all about finishing touches (**Fig.07**). I added more detail work to pretty much everything. I gave my character's torn shirt a faded red colour that gave some variety in colour, yet wasn't too overstated in the piece. I painted in more small details, like the pattern on the shoes, tiny veins on the muscles, and more shade in darker and deeper areas. On a new layer, I painted some wires/cables in the right top corner, and also some sort of chamber/box/machinery in the bottom left corner (where that big block of dark colour used to be). I applied a Gaussian Blur filter onto this layer so it appeared out of focus, thus giving my scene some more depth. This also helped balance out the composition a bit more. I gave my boy a shackle on one hand and some tears rolling down his face, hinting that perhaps, just maybe, there's something unpleasant going on. I painted some sort of a trap door, or a lower chamber entrance – or perhaps it's the door to that big entrance in the background that was kicked in earlier at some point? It doesn't matter; as long as it gives more texture (story-wise) to the piece, and as long as it gives something extra to the story I'm trying to tell, it doesn't really have to "be" anything in particular.



Fig.06

Just make sure it doesn't interfere with any of the other elements in the picture and keep it in accordance with the light source and the composition, and you're good.

It's important to remember that this is a portrait of a stylised character, not a full blown illustration of a scene in a castle, or a depiction of a lab and its utensils. So our focus needs to

stay on our character and his story. Just listen to it!

Patri Balanovsky

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Digital Painting Tutorial EBook

Introduction:

The Painting Armour eBook is a 39-page guide on how to tackle the subject of painting convincing armour. The eBook specialises in creating Medieval, Roman and Samurai armour. We asked industry professional Mike Lim (aka Daarken) to create easy-to-follow guides/tutorials on how to paint these types of armour, and as well giving expert tuition, Mike Lim has also supplied the brushes that he used, which can be downloaded at the beginning and end of the tutorials.

Chapter 01: Medieval

Chapter 02: Roman

Chapter 03: Samurai

Painting Armour



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SPEED PAINTING

Welcome to the Speed Painting section of the magazine. This month we've asked two artists to produce a speed painting based on a simple, one-line brief. Here we feature the final paintings and the overview of the creation processes.

This month our talented artists, [Emrah Elmasli](#) and [Justin Albers](#), tackle the topic:

*The machine
was their only means of escape*

Emrah Elmasli

Created In:

Adobe Photoshop CS3

Hello everyone! First of all, I would like to let you know that this month's speed painting will be an homage to English sci-fi painter, John Harris. When I first heard about the theme, the first thing that came to my mind was this scene, which is similar to one of John Harris's paintings. I thought it would really suit this theme, so I decided to paint it. It will be very a simple and graphical composition with strong use of colour. So let's get started.

Step 1

As usual, I'll be using Adobe Photoshop CS3 for this tutorial. It's going to be a vertical



Fig.01

composition, so I'll create a new A4 canvas at 150 ppi. Firstly, I need to block the main shapes and colours in, so I'll choose a textured flat brush and start to paint. I won't be using any fancy brushes for this speedy, so that it's easier for you to replicate what I do (hopefully). Anyway, I'm trying to create a silhouette of a spaceship with basic brush strokes; I'm trying to be really loose at this step of the painting (**Fig.01**). I also draw some perspective lines to create an illusion of depth to help me while I'm painting, and I'm using a very strong orange on the background because it's going to be a huge Sun!

Step 2

I create another layer to mask the upper part of the Sun and give it a nice round curve (**Fig.02**). I also create an Overlay layer and paint on the Sun to give it a basic form. Now I can start to paint in the details. I start with blue smoke coming from the launch pad; blue creates a really good contrast with the orange at the back. For the foreground I paint in a wide road going towards the launch pad. Then I pay some more attention to the



Fig.02

spaceship and paint in some more details on the launch pad. Small lights add an illusion of life to them.

Step 3

For the next step I just carry on detailing (Fig.03). I paint the prominent areas on the Sun and add detail to the chromosphere (the Sun's atmosphere). I'm still not sure about the shape of the space ship, by the way; I'll probably try to define a good shape for it whilst I finish the painting. I thought a rectangular shape with sharp edges would look good, but it looks like a building instead of a ship, so I'll soften the edges in the future steps.

Step 4

It's now time to paint the people walking on the road, who are all heading towards the spaceship to get the hell out of there, because the Sun is getting closer! That ship is their only chance to save them from extinction. As you can see, I soften the edges of the ship here – it looks more like a vehicle now. I won't give any form to it because I want to keep it like a silhouette (Fig.04).



Fig.03



Fig.04

Final

Almost done now! I always adjust colours while I'm painting, so here I open a new adjustment layer and tweak the colours a little; darkening the painting by adding some blue to it. This is the way I paint: adding contrast during the painting process. As a final touch, I apply a texture to the Sun, using a picture of the Sun that I found on the Internet, and just overlaying it on the painting. I erase out the parts I don't want and that's it – done (Fig.05)!

I hope you've enjoyed this painting process. Thanks for reading!

Emrah Elmasli

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Fig.05

Justin Albers

Created In:

Adobe Photoshop CS2

Step 1

This topic was a lot of fun for me to do – machines and robotic stuff are some of my favourite things to draw. There were lots of ways I could approach this topic, so I figure with those in mind I'll just get to it and see what develops. Here I've opened up a landscape canvas in Photoshop CS2. For now I just start laying down some colours and shapes for the background, using a few texture brushes for interest. I'm thinking of having a relatively cool colour palette with maybe some warmer colours around whatever the machine ends up being to make that my focal point (**Fig.01**).

Step 2

Next, I start working in a really, really rough drawing to start determining the form and silhouette of this thing. I'm thinking that the landscape will be harsh and angular, so for contrast I'm going to make the design of the machine more rounded and smooth. I'm keeping

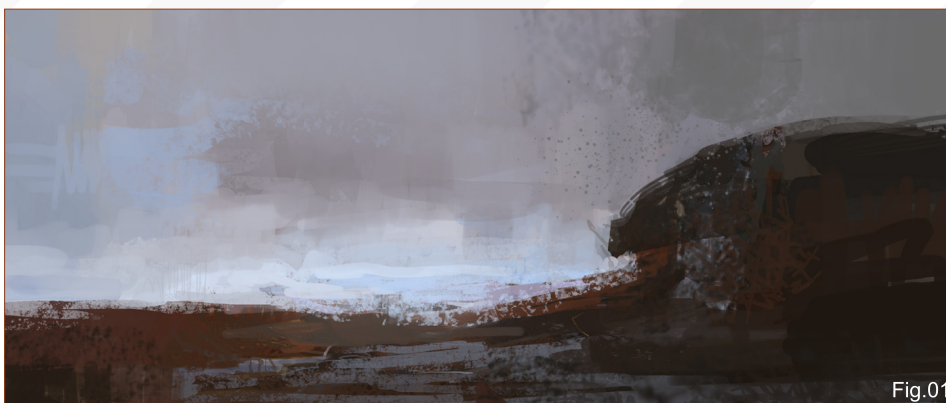


Fig.01

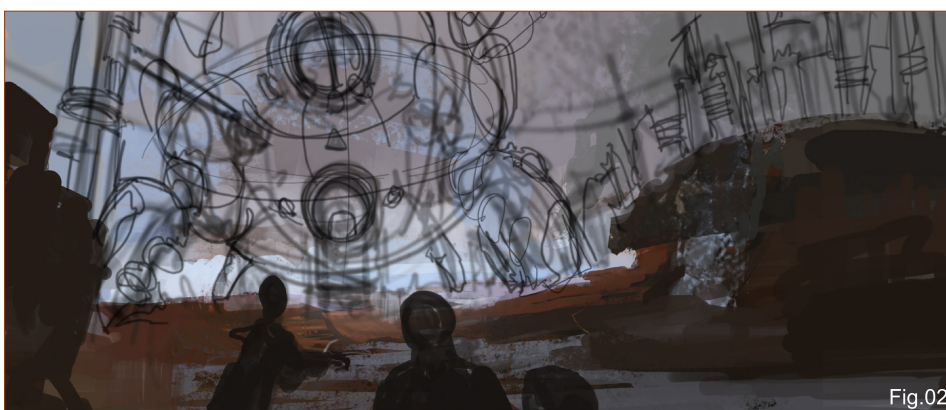


Fig.02

the drawing insanely loose because I'm not ready to commit to a design just yet (**Fig.02**).

Step 3

Here I begin roughing in some colours and filling in the shapes and silhouettes. I decide to start out with a sphere so I make a circular selection and start painting inside the selection over the rough drawing. Then I deselect the layer and

lock it so that I can keep the shape clean. I also determine that my light source will be coming in from the top left (**Fig.03**).

Step 4

I'm starting to lock in the composition of the piece – my thinking behind this piece is going to centre on a post-apocalyptic theme. In the future, the Earth has been ravaged by a world



Fig.03

war and all the cities are burning and dying out. The three figures in the painting are a father, mother and son hurrying to one of the last remaining ships leaving the planet for the temporary safety of space. I decide to make their clothing very ragged and makeshift, mixed in with some spacesuit elements. The machine is starting to look a bit more like a robot than a spacecraft, so I add in the gantry tower on the left and steam coming out of what I intend to be the engines and boosters to make it seem more like a ship waiting to launch. While painting, I use my navigator window to be sure the piece is reading from a distance (**Fig.04**).

Step 5

I'm still feeling out the details and trying to make the story come through in the painting. I add some incoming missiles heading towards the fiery city to add a sense of urgency to the situation. I'm also starting to finalise the design of the ship – I picture this thing taking off, the elevator at the bottom rising into the ship as the boarding hatch closes. The boosters on either side of the ship would fold down 90 degrees after lifting off to propel the ship into space and the legs would fold under the body. The towers and mechanical bits on top could be sensors



Fig.04



Fig.05

and navigation equipment. Overall, I'm digging the silhouette of this guy (**Fig.05**)!

Step 6

I give myself a little bit more room on the bottom of the piece and add more canvas so I can finish

the foreground figures and detail them out. I also add some details to the burning city and fade it into the background. I kind of like the blue/red combination of colours in the foreground; the red in the clothing and the blue light in the foreground is working for me, so I'm going



Fig.06



Fig.07

to try to keep that. I'm also trying to tighten the silhouette of each of the elements in the painting; I keep making selections and painting inside them to keep my shapes all sharp and clean ... at least for now (Fig.06).

Step 7

I continue to flesh out the piece, adding in some atmospheric effects to push the ship into the distance a bit. An airbrush would work, but I prefer to add a little bit of texture in there so I use a light texture brush and take the opacity down until it looks right. I thought it would be cool if I added in one of those highway signs smashed on the rocks to the right. To do this I make a square selection and paint inside it, lock it, and add my details (Fig.07). After this I use the transform tool to work the sign into the painting. I flip the piece a few times to fix what looks wrong or off.

Step 8

It was brought to my attention that the machine was looking a little flat, since it's directly facing the viewer. So I use the Transform > Warp tool to curve and turn the ship slightly to the

right, and adjusted the legs and side boosters accordingly (Fig.08).

To finish off the painting I continue to add in detail and texture and clean up the forms. For presentation I shrink it down and run a Sharpen filter on it. At some point I decide to call it quits ... it's only a matter of time before I overwork it and totally destroy everything! There are still a

few things I would like to fix or add, but to me if I can get the idea of the painting across to the viewer without having to explain it, then it's successful; I can always go back in and develop it further into a finished piece.

Thanks for checking out this tutorial and have fun painting!



Fig.08



Justin Albers

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“Whilst it may seem an obvious choice to produce symmetrically aligned transport, with the advent of space travel which can hypothetically surmount gravitic issues, it stands to reason that symmetry and conventional existing design issue may not necessarily be adhered to.”

SPACE PAINTING

I – PLANETS AND STAR FIELDS

PART 1: STARS + NEBULAS – JULY 2008

PART 2: BARREN WORLDS – AUGUST 2008

PART 3: BARREN PLANETS – SEPTEMBER 2008

PART 4: GAIAN PLANETS – OCTOBER 2008

PART 5: COLONISED PLANETS – NOVEMBER 2008

II – TRANSPORT

PART 6: SPACESHIPS – DECEMBER 2008

PART 7: CAPITAL SHIPS – JANUARY 2009

PART 8: SPACE STATIONS – FEBRUARY 2009

III – ENVIRONMENTS

PART 9: SCI-FI HANGAR – MARCH 2009

PART 10: SPACE BATTLE – APRIL 2009

PART 11: MINING THE ASTEROID FIELDS – MAY 2009

PART 12: SPACE COLONIES – JUNE 2009

SPACE PAINTING

TRANSPORT: PART 6 SPACESHIPS

Created In:

Photoshop

Introduction

Welcome to part six of our space and sci-fi digital painting series, with particular focus on space transport. This will span over the next three workshops categorised from small spaceships, to middle, to large-sized transport (capital ships), and culminating in design for space stations. In each tutorial segment, we will consider simple traditional techniques and discuss design and function first and foremost. Effective design is being able to fully translate your ideas across in an accurate and inspiring manner towards the recipient, be it a 3D modeller, game designer, art director or a member of the public (**Fig.01**).

Form & Function

Space transport comes in all forms and can generally be split into the following:

- Geometric
- Industrial and angular (functional)
- Organic and xenomorphic

The other aspect to consider is whether the overall shape is symmetrical or asymmetrical. Whilst it may seem an obvious choice to produce symmetrically aligned transport, with the advent of space travel which can hypothetically surmount gravitic issues, it stands to reason that symmetry and conventional existing design issue may not necessarily be adhered to. Therein lays the challenge: to produce a convincing design in whatever shape, form or symmetry.

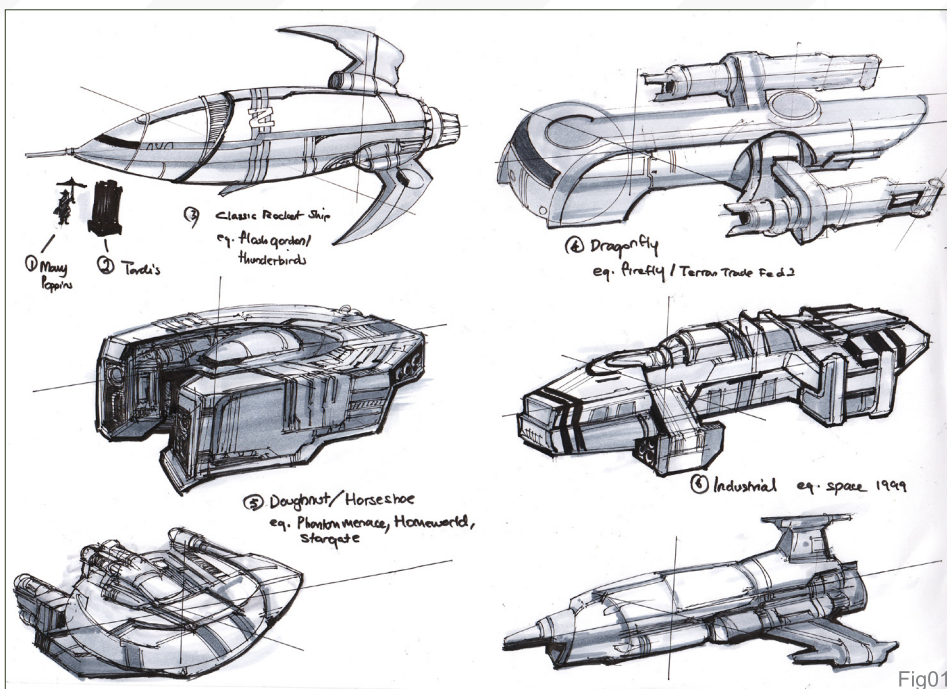


Fig01

For the purposes of this tutorial, let's consider a functional and partially geometric function (we'll cover the more exotic shapes in the 'capital ships' section of the subsequent tutorial).

Fig.01 illustrates various classical and retro spaceship designs currently known in popular culture, as follows:

1. Marry Poppins – Yes, I consider her to be but an android in disguise as a super nanny (how else can one explain her anti gravitic vertical takeoff and landing capabilities, via an umbrella?)
2. Tardis – An unconventionally shaped spaceship of the time lords (where the insides are larger than the exterior due to non Newtonian 4-dimensional capabilities)
3. Classical Space Rocket Ship – e.g. Flash Gordon
4. Dragonfly/Animal shape – e.g. Firefly/Terran Trade Federation
5. Doughnut/Horseshoe – e.g. Phantom Menace/Homeworld/Stargate
6. Industrial – e.g. Space: 1999/Aliens/Pitch Black
7. UFO/Saucer – e.g. Independence Day
8. Cigar-shaped/Jet fighter-shaped – e.g. Buck Rogers/Battlestar Galactica/Star Wars/Thunderbirds

Let's next consider a fictional spaceship manufacturer, Azora Dynamics, who will be designing and producing a multipurpose and modular space transport. This can be used for civilian purposes, law enforcement or even deep space racing (fictitiously named Formula Double Zero based on the current Earth's Formula One). It has been tasked with producing a new prototype for mass market use, and to be kept in consideration is that this transport must carry one to two passengers, and can be used for atmospheric re-entry. In terms of technology, gravity has a minimal effect of this space

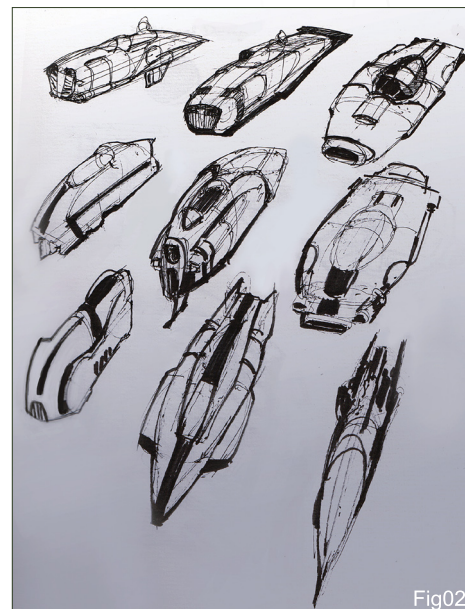


Fig02

transport, but during atmospheric flight, tiny aerodynamic adjustments may provide small advantages, crucial for Formula 00 racing.

Prototyping

Traditional Tools Required: Biro/pencil/ink gel pen, paper (any kind) and imagination (as standard)

First of all, let's consider various forms for our single/twin seater transport (**Fig.02**). You can explore these designs in a side view or as show in 3/4th perspective view. Personally, it appears to be easier to explore forms in the latter view, but many folk find it easier with the side orthographic view. It doesn't really matter, as long as the overall shape and form is explored.

These images were rendered with a mixture of a cheap 37p biro and thick 0.7 gel ink pens. I find it particularly effective to use stripes and marks across a vehicle, or along its frontal/posterior axis, to suggest form (**Fig.03**).

So, using the example of a sphere, let's consider designing a dumbbell-shaped vehicle. In the designs shown in **Fig.03**, various cockpit configurations and some degree of asymmetry are included within the designs. Spherical designs look good with a low slung turret/canon. Alternatively, a twin barrelled cannon can be mounted above each sphere, or on the far sides.

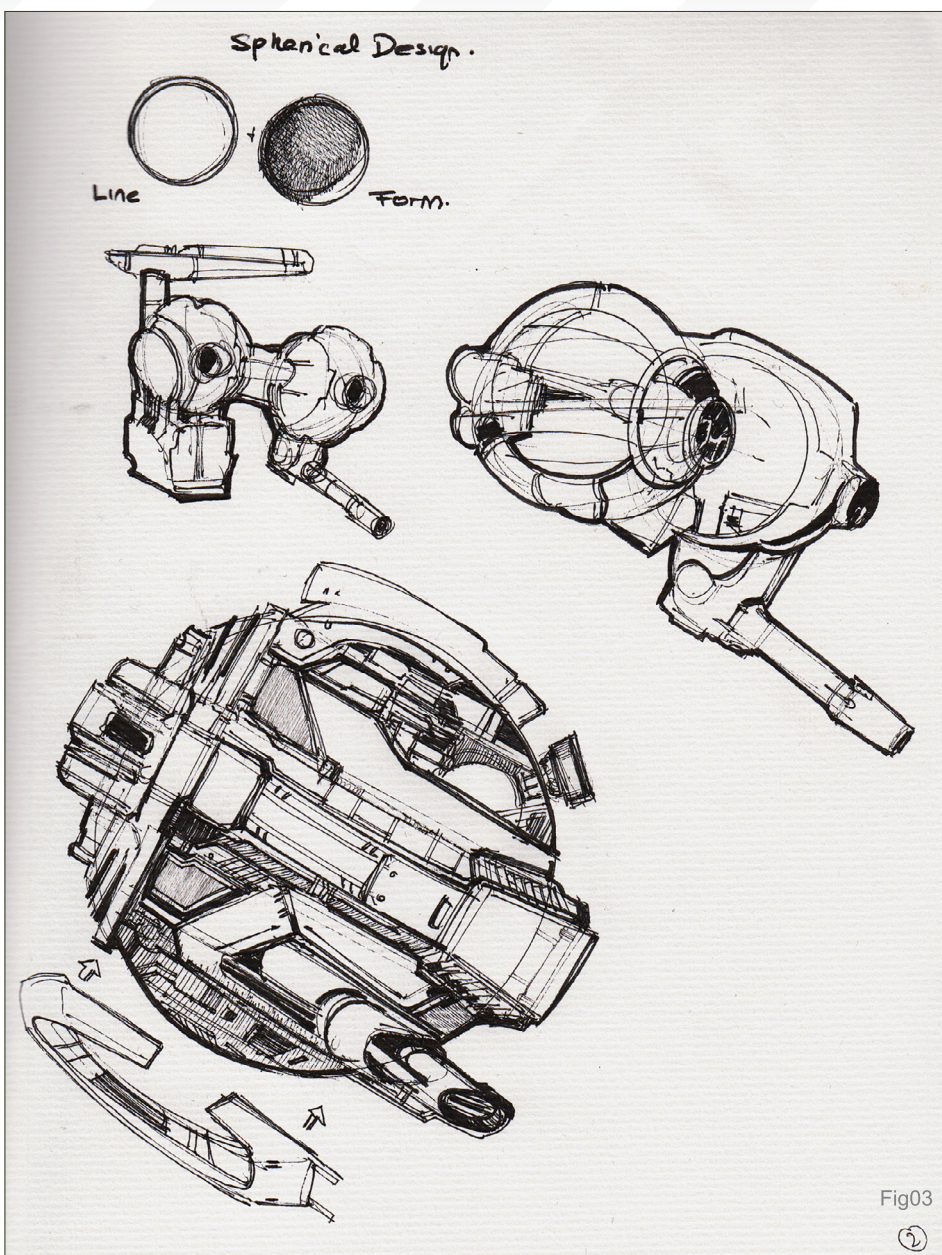


Fig03

②

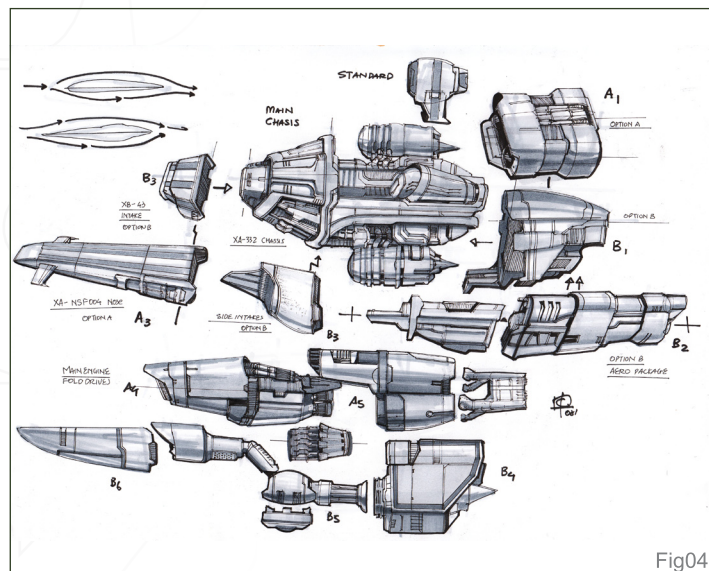


Fig04

Once the initial form is considered, it's sometimes useful to consider the internal mechanics underneath the external cowling armour plating (as shown in the singular sphere design in **Fig.03**).

Designing the prototype XA-332

Having decided upon the overall form to be a cigar-shaped shell, reminiscent of the historic 1950 Grand Prix Formula One front engine racing cars, let's attempt to spruce it up towards a probable function and purpose for space based racing.

In the exploded schematic (**Fig.04**), a finalised view of the fictitious XA-332 is rendered using digital markers and marker paper (after years of resisting the use of marker paper, I finally succumbed when having to produce proper production art marker renderings, which the thin marker paper allows to good effect).

Working with Markers: a simplified Industrial Design Approach

Traditional Tools Required: Cool grey markers 20%, 30% and 50%, Pilot G-Tec-C4 0.25 and 0.4, Pilot G-2 0.7

Recommended Paper: Any high quality bleed proof marker pad, e.g. Letraset

The trick here is in the wetness of the mark! Working with markers, one has to work quickly and rapidly, whilst the mark is still wet. This allows you to graduate your various tones (normally I use a grey tone of 20%, 30% and 50%, primarily) repeatedly over one to two passes, and then lock the design down in ink (I prefer using Pilot 0.4 Hi-Tec-C/G-Tec-C4 pens). Shadows and stripes on the other hand are best done with grey 70%, produced in one single pass.

It's really all down to repeated practise; it's normal to destroy 2-4 sheets of paper before finding a good balance between marker renders and inks. For inspiration and reference, one can refer to the great concept art markers rendered by Doug Chiang and Feng Zhu (my personal heroes) – their treatment of value appears simple and yet communicates across so effectively.

From various experiments, I find it easiest to do as follows:

1. Basic form and perspective – Loosely mark down the overall form using a 10-20% cool grey marker. Take note to plan your vertical and main axis (the line stretching from the front to the rear of your transport design). Don't worry about leaving residual marks or unsightly construction lines; the whole idea is to communicate your overall form using the values established by your marker pens.

2. Tonal values – Next, whilst the markers are still moist, proceed to lay down your tones using 30% and 50% cool grey markers. You need to

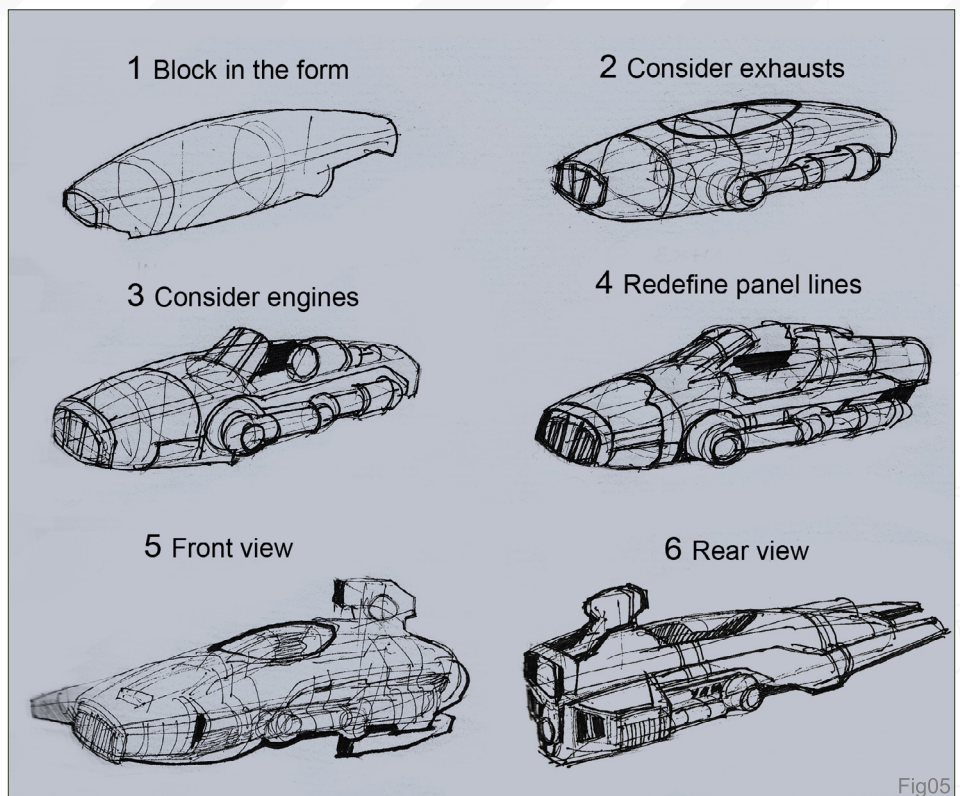


Fig05

ensure you have a relatively good idea of your light source to enable you to show reflectivity. Some simple observation of how light forms bands on a cylinder or a shiny parked car can provide immediate and simple reference.

3. Overall form – You want to outline your design now with your smallest ink pen available. If available, use a fine tip 0.25 pen to ghost the various outlines.

4. Accentuate your lines – You can further accentuate this with a 0.4 diameter pen, ensuring that you start blocking in further details, panel lines and considering how various parts may interlink to form logical but functional shapes.

5. Research and Knowledge – These designs do not require a Master's degree in engineering, but some rudimentary knowledge of how transport is put together, and can be front, rear or mid-engined, will be helpful. Some basic reference/research will also stand you in good stead – in the UK, this is available via the free Imperial War museum exhibits or various

historic aircraft and motorsport parks/facilities, e.g. in Duxford (Cambridgeshire), Donnington Park (Derby), or the Brooklands Museum (Surrey) to name just a few.

I've taken the opportunity to collect and provide some reference images first hand from the following locations:

- Imperial War Museum: Engines, Planes and Decals
- Duxford: Engines and Planes

Basic Design

Traditional Tools Required: Biro, pen or pencil
Let's now look at how we can approach the design of a semi elliptical and cylindrical object (**Fig.05**). How to draw a cigar, with reference to **Fig.05**, the approach (3/4th perspective view) is broken down into four simple steps, as follows:

1. Blocking in the Form – Ensure the main axes are drawn first, to suggest a horizontal and vertical axis relative to the perspective plane you intend to use. Then roughly outline how you would like the overall form to appear. Ensure the construction lines start from one side

and continue on the other. This ensures that a modeller can understand how the form is lathed on both sides, and whether the form is symmetrical or asymmetrical.

2. Consider Exhausts – Next, try to consider if there are any external ports, engine exhausts or thrusters. These will suggest how the transport will be propelled.

3. Consider Engines – Most of the time the engines will not be obviously shown externally, and it may seem strange to consider it at this point. However, if you consider very simply that if it will be located in the front, mid or back, then this allows you to determine where aspects such as seating, cockpits and avionics, electronic equipment and countermeasures can be located. In this instance, the design suggests a central engine starting with intakes from the nose and travelling through the underbelly towards multiple rear housed engines.

4. Redefine Parallel Lines – This last step means to add panel lines in parallel to the main axis, and also to add smaller details such as access hatches, further panelling and plated areas.

Engines

Engines form a distinctive character towards any form of transport, in particular aerospace related vehicles. There are a whole host of engine types that can be categorised into two types: funnel-shaped and needle-shaped. Both may incorporate small adjustable fins to better

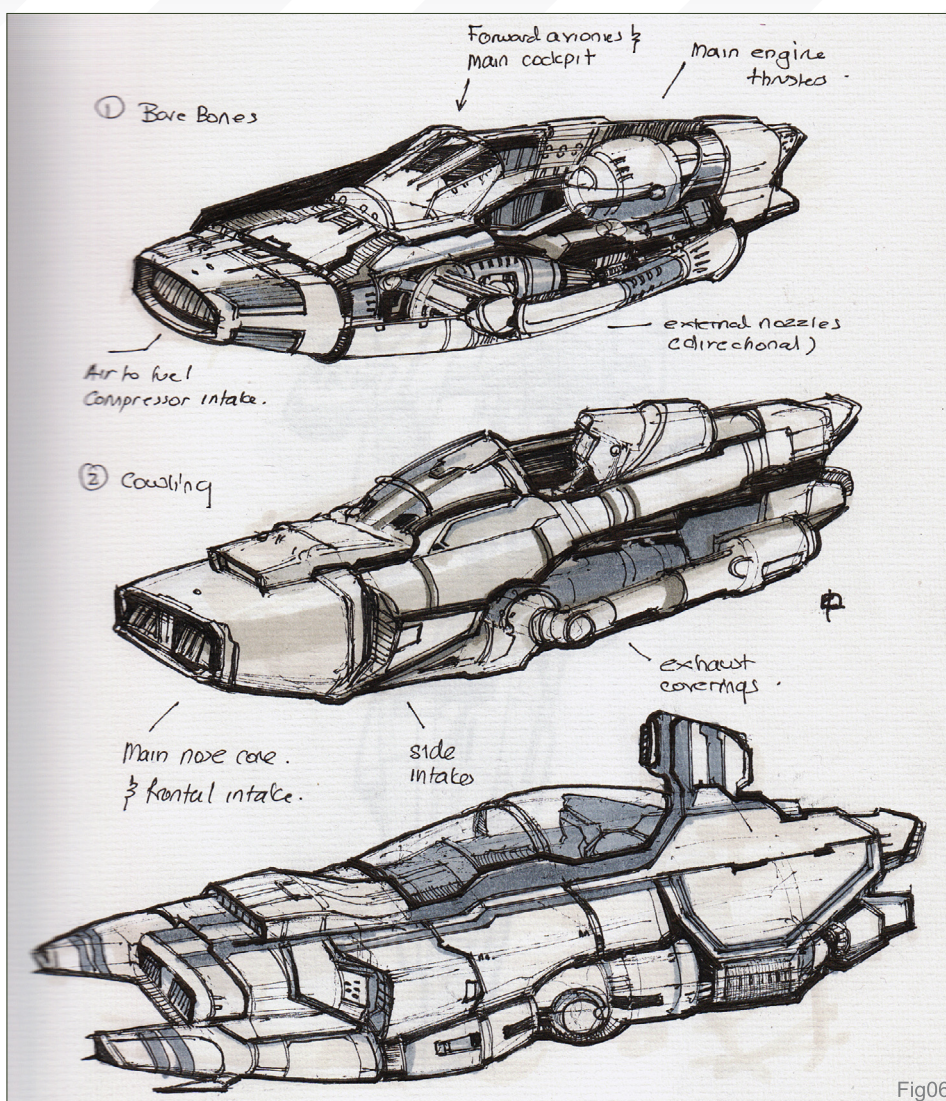


Fig06

control and direct thrust. In addition, engines tend to feature smaller sets of piping and tubes that regulate fuel, an oxygen/fuel mixture and combustion, and multiple pressure valve controlled feedback loops.

Within our designs, we'll stick primarily to circular exhausts, although they may be housed

in different shaped external housing – as both an aesthetic/aerodynamic consideration.

XA-332 Sunred Prototype

Let's take a look at some shapes and designs for the XA-332 (Fig.06 – 08).

Fig.06 – Three part process illustration the working mechanics of the XA-332 from inwards to out

Fig.07 – Shows the low shot view of the XA-332 side

Fig.08 – Illustrates the underbelly of the XA-332 Sunred

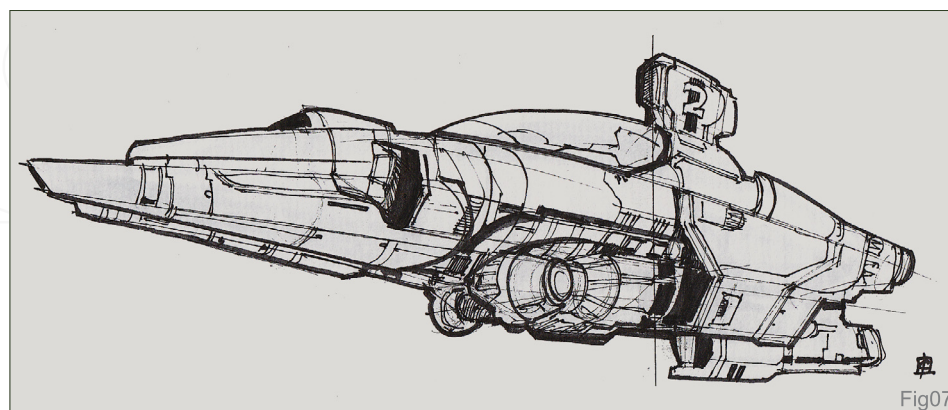


Fig07

We're going to settle on a rudimentary design which we now need to consider in different angles, views and perspectives. Sometimes,

if your design is going to be considered for production or initial 3D prototyping, then it's useful to consider breaking the design up into three parts (**Fig.06**), as follows:

1. Internal engine and mechanics
2. External frame/exoskeleton
3. Full armour plating and final external form

Much like dissecting being required to understand the anatomy of a species, of bone, muscle, organs and flesh, we can use a similar analogy to understand transport design, such as:

- **Organs** – Are analogous to the combustion engine that receives fuel from its storage parts.
- **Fuel** – Is analogous to the blood that carries vital nutrients to supply the organs and ensure the body/machine has power for locomotion, sensors, weapons, defence and life support.
- **Bones** – The underlying main skeleton that holds the frame of the machine together; it tends to be a rigid structure that can be split into an internal basic frame and a external exoskeleton frame.
- **Flesh** – Analogous to the overall rigid skin of a machine, which can additionally be toughened with conventional armour plating, energy fields e.g. force fields, kinetic and chemical armour.

For the XA-332 Sunred, we have determined that this will be a multipurpose fighter/civilian

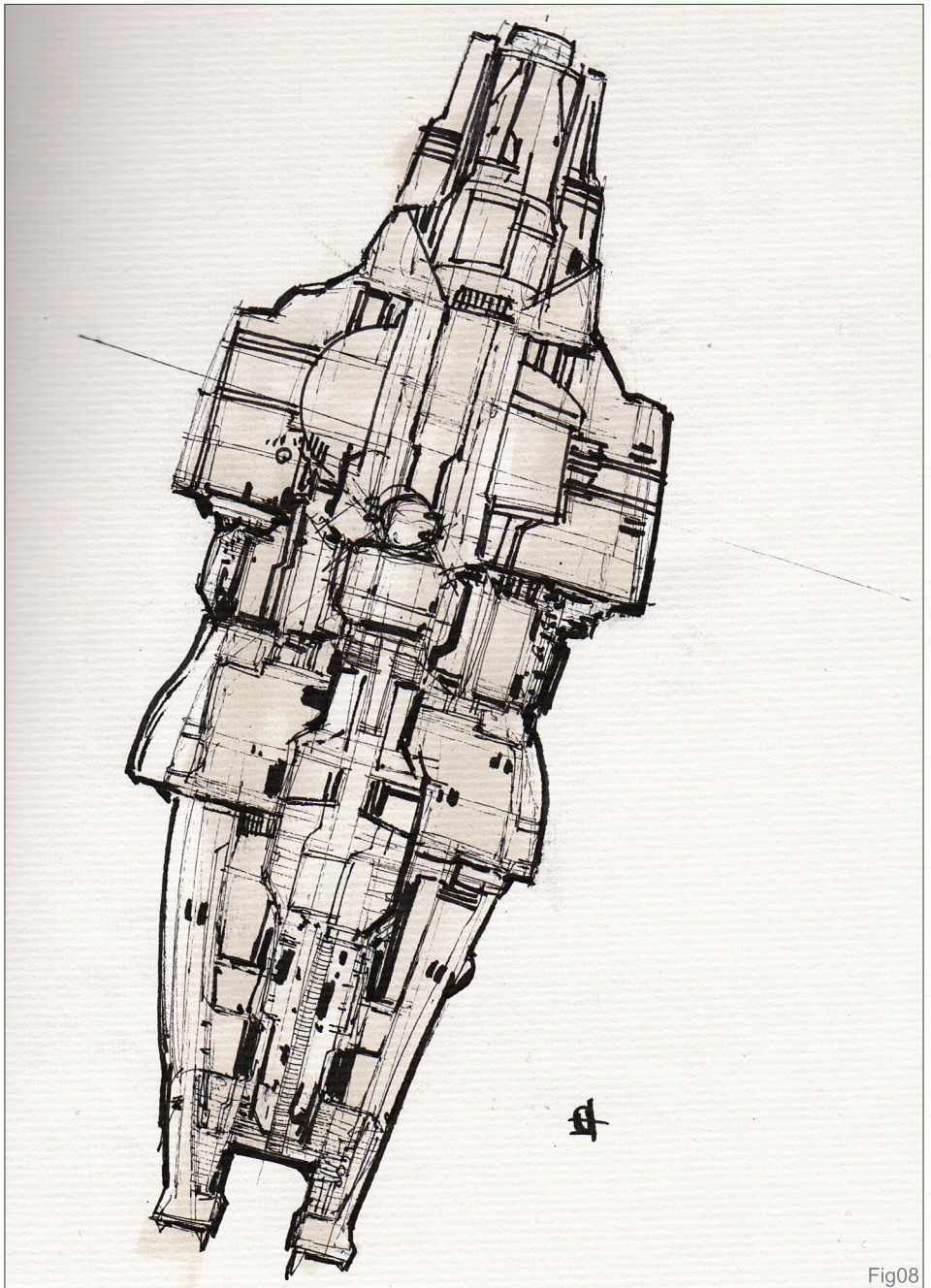


Fig08

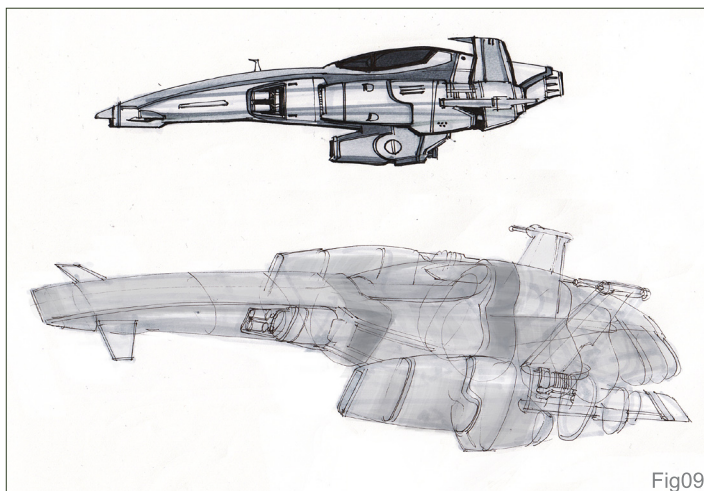


Fig09

craft that has a central cigar-shaped shell, ideally built for a single seated pilot (**Fig.06**). From the inside working our way out we have as follows:

1. **Bare bones** – Depicts the internal working mechanics, engine and basic cockpit.
2. **Cowling** – Depicts the internal frame that shelters the mechanics above and provides basic protection.
3. **Full frame** – Shows the full external view that is hardened and built to withstand the various extremities of the environment.

Having determined the basic working mechanics of your new prototype, it is now important to consider the main views of your overall structure (**Fig.07 – 08**). Take the opportunity to finalise any major design changes

and explore the underside of the vehicle (as these are often poorly designed and prone to attack/prove vulnerable).

Advancing the Design

Having established the primary design of your prototype, known as the first and second pass, you have the opportunity to explore different iterations/variants and finalise your design for production culminating in a full illustrated production design (Fig.09 – 11).

Fig.09 – Starting with markers (side view)

Fig.10 – Finalised marker design

To consider an alternative design but still enable the XA-332 to function, let's take a look at old F1 racing cars. Then let's look at modern F1 cars

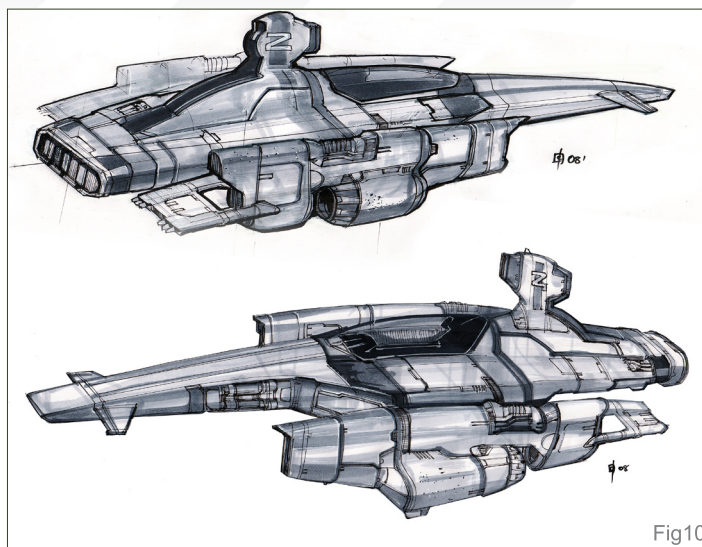
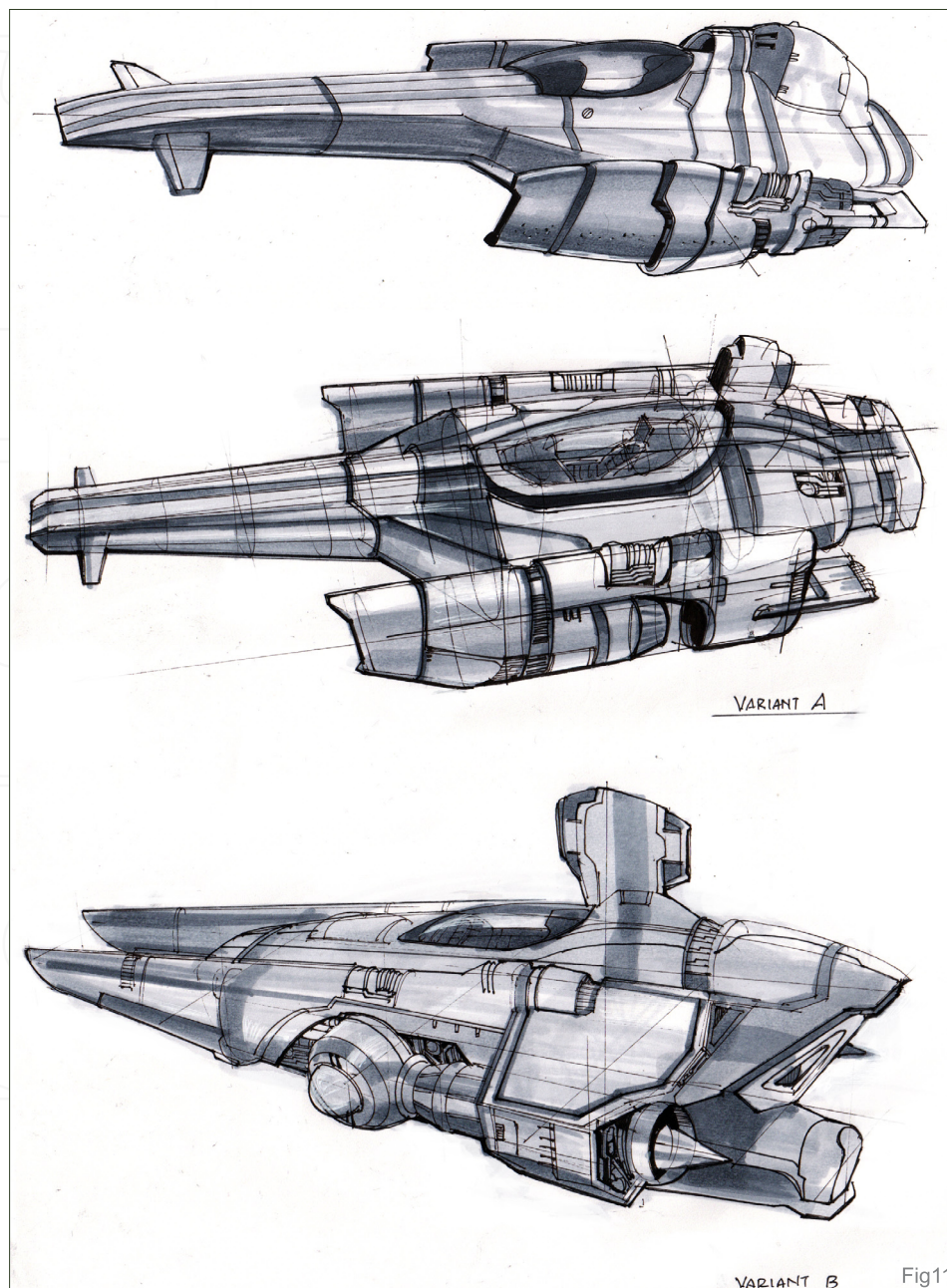


Fig10



VARIANT A

VARIANT B

Fig11

which feature strange 2008 winglets in the front, and giant front loaded wings as large as the rear for the 2009 F1 event. F1 requires tremendous amounts of downward thrust to keep the cars hugging the road as closely as possible, whilst hurtling forward at tremendous speeds. With spacecrafts, the need for aerodynamics can be arguably minimised. However, the way to translate a speedy vehicle is to design a relatively streamlined design.

XA-332

Taking a leaf from F1, let's take the option of streamlining the XA-332 further with a frontal nose cone (Fig.09). Included are two large directional fins situated within obvious sight directly behind the side engine thrusters.

In view of the inspirational race by Lewis Hamilton of the final race in Brazil (Grand Prix 2008) which lead to victory by a stroke of a race thought to be lost, I would like to dedicate the next design to this inspirational young driver, and I've called it the Hamilton NSF22; think of it as a Formula Double Zero – aero package and streamline treatment of the main chassis XA-332.

In addition, in this initial sketch we'll briefly explore the use of two large stabilising vertical fins. These, however, look perhaps too conventional and are removed for the final

production design. The start of the design is a low wash of grey 20% and 50% to bulk out the form in grey values. The overall feel is kept low contrast. Only a thin wash of ink outlines the major key areas in this initial step.

Production Ready

Once the final key designs are accomplished, it's time to produce the finalised marker designs (Fig.10). A frontal and rear 3/4th perspective view are chosen to illustrate the XA-332. All the basic steps are employed, only this time we wait for the markers to dry out before adding in further details, and give it a second pass of markers and inks.

The key thing to note here is to add only an additional heavier line weight on the bottom of the transport, to further bulk and accentuate its overall form. If the line weight is too heavy, it will contrast dramatically with the overall design, so a careful maintained balance is necessary.

To finish up, included are three additional variant designs that explore different engine designs or placements and accentuate the overall feel (Fig.11). In this instance, the best designs are still the earliest designs for both the XA-332 and Sunred transport.

Scanning

Working with markers can be both a joy and a pain. The thing about markers is, eventually the alcohol based ink dries, and the vibrancy that you get when the ink has just set is not as discernable 1-2 days later – and much more faded over the next few weeks, months and years, until it is but a mere shadow of its initial glory. So, as advice goes, do try to scan your designed works in within a few hours to a day at the most after conception. Nevertheless, even if it does fade, you can apply a few corrections with Adobe Photoshop.

In Fig.12, the illustration shows a scan of a design that was 2-3 days old; some simple steps were taken to clean and correct its levels

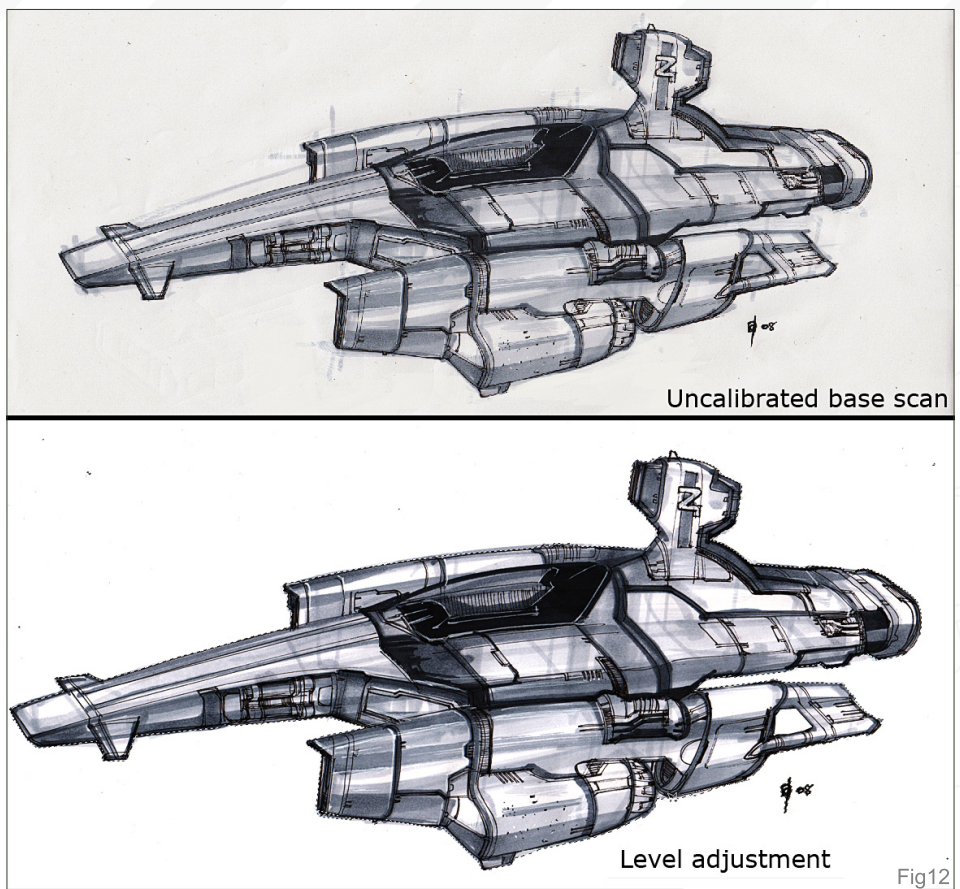


Fig12

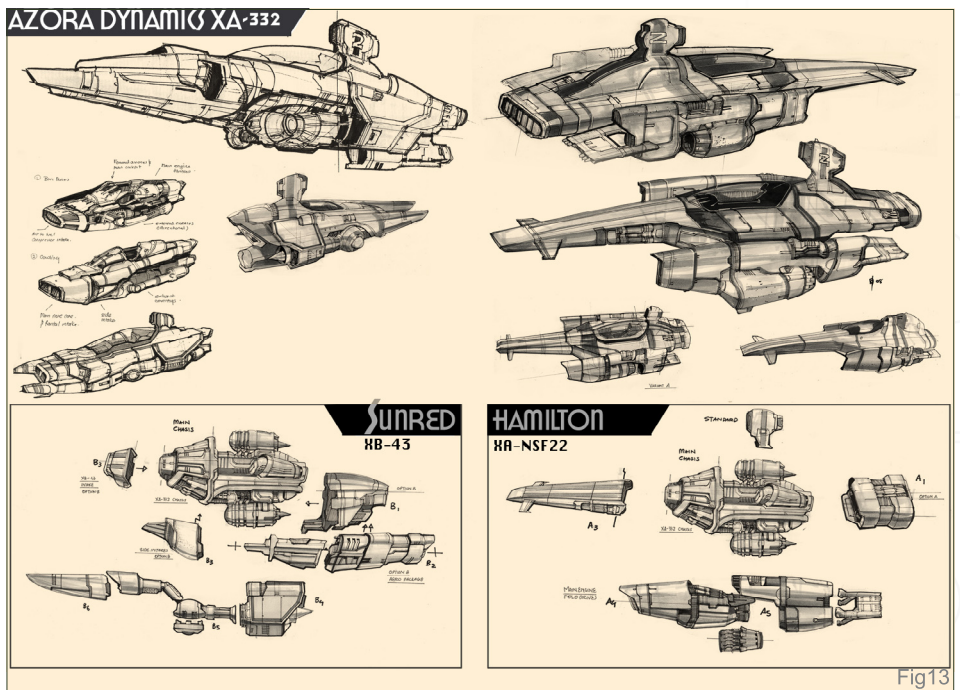


Fig13

in Photoshop. All you need to do is access the Image > Adjustment > Levels function tool (Ctrl + L), and move the sliders in the middle slightly to the right, and the slider on the far right towards the level (corresponding to the peak of the histogram). That should get you a relatively

clean marker sheet as good as when it was freshly created.

To finish off, you can scan in all your marker designs and present them in a logical and clean fashion (Fig.13).

Storyboard 101

We're two-thirds through our workshop and the end is in sight. Well ... almost! Before we present our designs to the head chief of engineering for consideration of use for a production model, it would help if we could imagine this transport being used. As such, we can rely again on simple basic techniques: storyboarding (**Fig.14**). Now, you can use any form of media to storyboard according to your personal preference. Digital is as good as traditional. Some folks even use post it notes to storyboard different beats.

In **Fig.14** there are five different views of a space race taking place on the surface of a planet/moon, as follows:

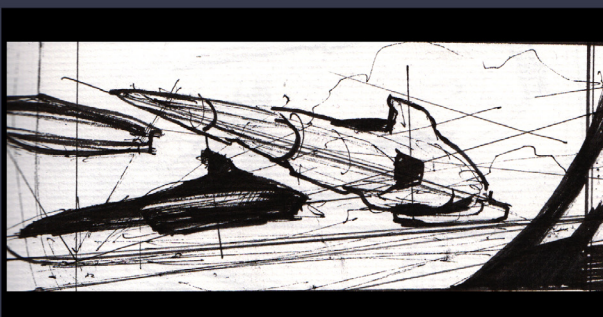
1. A – Canyon Run
2. B – Near Collision
3. C – Tight Turn
4. D – Flyby Tower
5. E – Whirlwind Run

With each panel, try to use one to two keywords to describe the scene. What I find is if the panel is strong enough, those one or two words are more than sufficient to describe the whole scene. In fact, because it is so minimalist, the headline words can accentuate the story with great impact.

For our illustration, I would like to go for a mixture of A (Canyon Run) and C (Tight Turn) set on a desert surface of a moon.

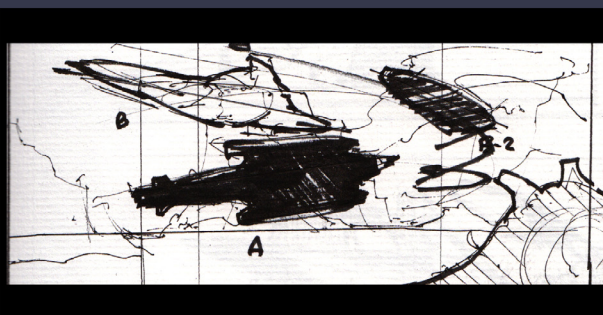
Space Canyon Race Illustration

Great, so now that we have spent all this time preparing for our final illustration and all the steps are in place, ensure that all the key transports are scanned in and cleaned – it is the clean crispness of the edges that determine how successful the final image is, relative to the line work.



A

Canyon Run



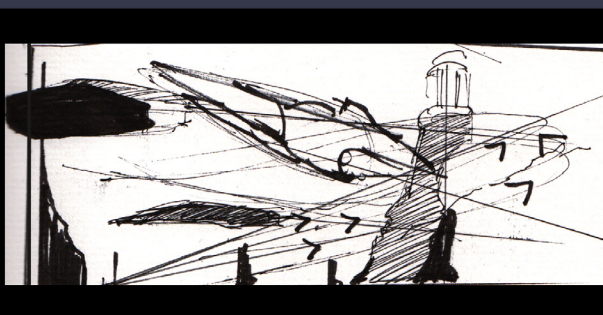
B

Near Collision



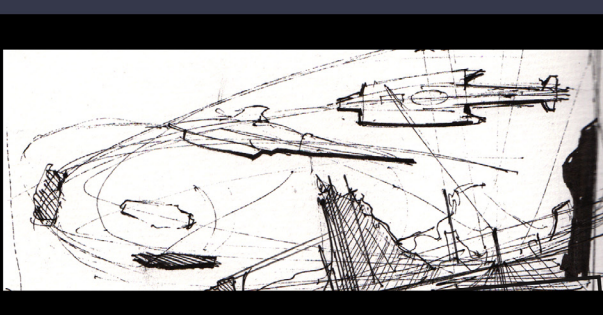
C

Tight Turn



D

Flyby Tower



E

Whirlwind Run

STORYBOARDING 101

Fig14

In addition, be prepared to lose some of the original lines for a more logical layout.

- **Perspective and Layout** – Using the established designs and storyboards, lay out the composition grid and align vehicles accordingly (**Fig.15**). Save these grids on a new separate layer, which you can turn on/ off at will.

We have opted for a three point perspective and an aerial view. One of the vanishing points is located on the lower third right, so that it is close enough to follow the rule of thirds but does not conform to it totally (for a more naturalistic feel).

- **Establish horizon line & perspective** – Add vehicle drawings on new layer set to multiply. Clean the edges and make clean selections of the overall form to save as an alpha mask (**Fig.16**).

Next, establish the background plane relative to the horizon using flat washes. In this instance, feel free to use colour directly, to establish an initial image.

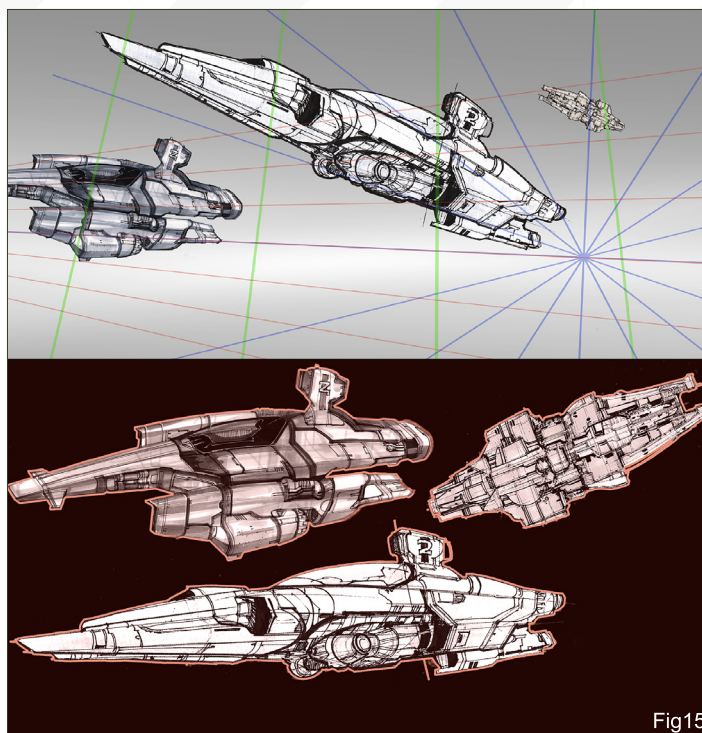


Fig15

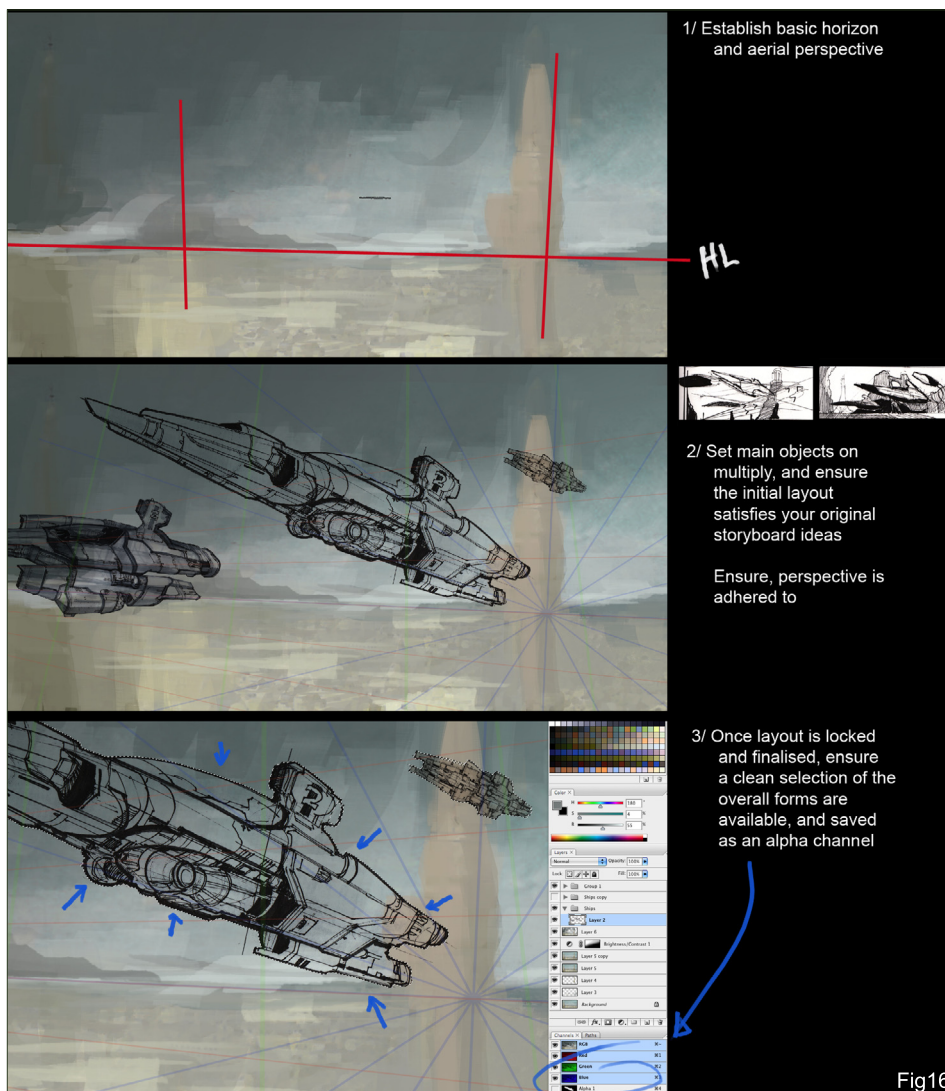


Fig16

1/ Establish basic horizon and aerial perspective



2/ Set main objects on multiply, and ensure the initial layout satisfies your original storyboard ideas

Ensure, perspective is adhered to

3/ Once layout is locked and finalised, ensure a clean selection of the overall forms are available, and saved as an alpha channel

I have taken the liberty of ensuring that there is both a diffuse light source pooling down the centre, and a vague shape of an observation tower (far right) and large looming structure in the far distance (far left). The large structure is much shorter, relatively, to allow for perspective as well. These both occupy the areas corresponding to the rule of thirds.

Bring your vehicles into the image (on a separate layer), and do check again that their outlines are saved onto an alpha mask/channel, as you will be constantly reusing this throughout the whole illustration.

Colour Tone: Earth & Sky Colour

Once the vehicles are included, you need to consider how to colour and light them. Observe images of Formula 1 cars, for example, and then consider how the light reflects off shiny surfaces – take some photographs as reference to help you to better understand light, colour and reflectivity. You can then apply your direct observations into your painting (**Fig.17 – 18**), as follows:

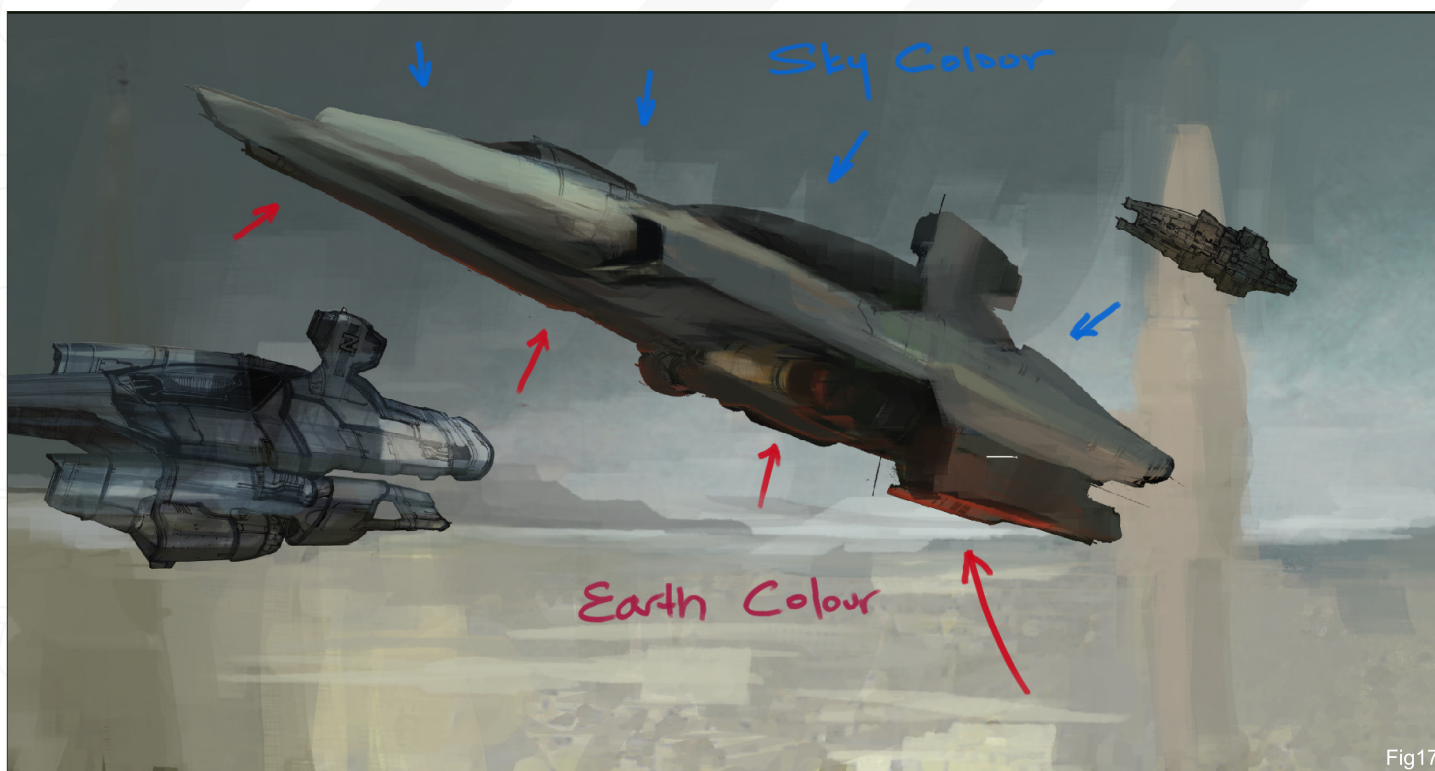


Fig17

1. Block in – Select your main transport and provide a flat wash of tone; I tend to paint from neutral dark to light. This is painted directly on a new layer above your lined art, and this is where Form and Line are in transition. In an illustration, the quality of an object is in its overall form, whereas in a schematic, the line work takes more precedents. Both are interdependent but convey different overall aesthetics. Images that have flat washes of colour and form, and are outlined with line, are termed graphic design/ images.

2. Warm and cold – Once the general shapes are blocked in, you can use your observation of warm and cold colours to give light and shadow to your objects (Fig.17). In general, a shiny metallic surface reflects a sky tone (whatever colour the direct ambient light is above), and similarly the underbelly/underside reflects an earth tone. Sometimes the reflected or bounced light for the earth tone can even be as bright as the direct light.

3. Establish a swatch/palette – Once the basic forms are blocked in, it can be useful to establish a colour palette for use (Fig.18).

This is like an immediate colour guide (handy paint by numbers colour) to apply from areas above and below. Once you have worked out the colour tones, it saves a lot of additional guesswork and can lead to very methodical workflows.

4. Selections – Try to establish selections of flat areas that share the same tone/shade. This

allows you to quickly apply flat washes of colour or graduated gradients to help you suggest form quickly and relatively painlessly.

Bringing it all together

1. Background Environment – This is probably the most important step to help sell/support the image you are presenting (Fig.19). An interesting background or environment for your

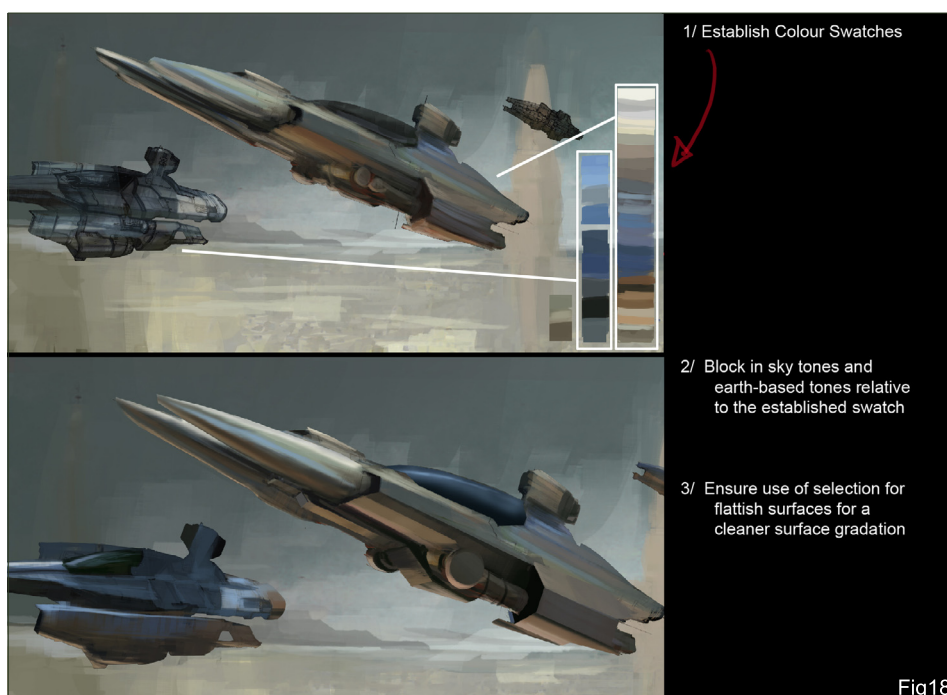


Fig18

vehicles will lend it an appearance of being within an illustration.

2. Instant Contrast – So far our background has been mainly neglected and relatively low contrast and indistinct. That is alright though, because by rapidly copying the whole layer onto a new layer (set to multiply), you can subsequently erase out areas that are too dark to produce a quick fire environment.

3. Check – Ensure your perspective and composition work by bringing up your established perspective grids.

4. Block it out – Similar to the transport, use the largest brush size you can tolerate, and quickly work out some general shapes in block form. All these do is to add some suggestion to the background. Try not to add any details as such. We want to keep it loose but also realistic (in the sense, objects in the distance appear blurred and just general shapes, however our brain fills in all the missing details from its established database of forms and established shapes).

5. Focal lighting – We darken the whole image (on a new layer) to allow for more focal lighting. In reference to **Fig.20**, we are allowing light to suggest the form across both the transports and the environments.

6. Rim lights and tightening up – Now that we've reincorporated the transports into the image, we need to establish the areas which have the highlights and the areas which reside in shadow. Please note that all areas covered by a shadow should have the same tone and saturation unless it varies by distance (or local effects e.g. local fire).

7. Bounced ambient light – Ensure that the underside is also reasonably lit from the bounced ambient light.

Almost There!

The overall image is almost complete now,



1/ Copy BG layer, and set to multiply

2/ Check perspective and use selections to define flat planes relative to perspective

3/ Block out general shapes. Details are not required

4/ Darken overall image and mask out areas lit by focal light source

5/ Add rim lighting and bounced ambient light

Fig19

and it's just a matter of taking that extra step of ensuring details are correctly in place.

1. Add jet wash – I choose to use some diamond-shaped thrusts based on existing research by XCOR/JPL/NASA using methane

rocket engines. Ideally, some more exotic engine washes like laser or light propulsion emissions which may feature doughnuts on a string appearance may feature (but in this instance, may be too far from the general public's perceived idea of an engine wash). The

vehicle in the distance features a more bluish engine wash, characteristic of ion engines.

2. Add motion blur – Using the motion blur filter, copy the whole image onto a new layer by selecting the whole canvas (Ctrl + A). Copy all the layers (Ctrl + Shift + C) and subsequently paste as normal (Ctrl + V). Ensure the blur occurs in the general direction of the vehicles (in this instance, the blur is almost running from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock). You can then lower the overall opacity (20-40%). Ensure that you erase out the blur from the transport to provide you with a freeze frame capture image (similar to taking a 1/800 s shot).

3. Smudge leading edges – For the final touches, ensure you smudge lightly various edges and try to blend the vehicle and environment together well. The use of some atmospheric perspective (dust) may help.

4. Optional – Decals may help accentuate the overall feel; however, in this instance, none were used.

5. Finish – A few colour corrections and subtle lighting changes, and you are finally finished (Fig.20 – 21).

Final Thoughts

To conclude this initial spaceship workshop, I have taken you through the basics of industrial design; we've talked briefly about form, and how to establish and present form using light, colour and temperature using both traditional media (which can be low cost, relatively cheap and straightforward) and digital to present your ideas across effectively. At the end of the day, it's about effective communication – communicated effectively.

In the next instalment we'll take a look at giant destroyers and capital ships. As always, I hope this has been helpful and informative.



Fig20

Dr Chee Ming Wong

For more from this artist visit:

<http://www.opusartz.com>

Or contact:

info@opusartz.com





Vue 7TM

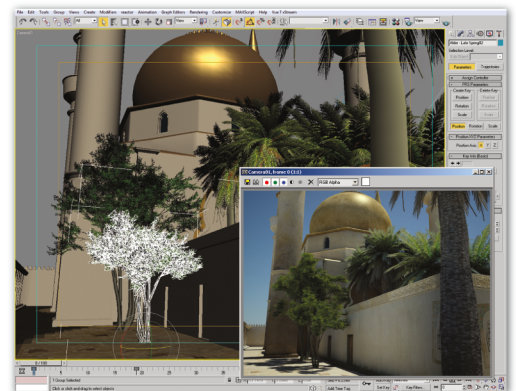
Digital Nature

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Vue 7 offers professional CG artists a complete toolset for creating and rendering exceptionally rich and realistic natural environments.

With Vue 7 xStream, access all the power of the world's leading 3D scenery program directly from within your favorite application. Create, edit and render beautifully detailed natural environments using your application's standard tools.

Works with:



3ds Max mosque model, rendered with Vue environments using Mental Ray Sun & Sky.

“Quite often I see portraits where the ears or hairline are too high on the head, or too low; where the eyes are too far apart, the mouth too small or the nose too long in proportion to the rest of the head.”

the human face

part three - portrait

Have you ever wondered how to achieve that extra level of realism in your character's face? Or simply wanted to brush up on your knowledge of facial anatomy? Then this excellent, three-part tutorial from Nikolai Aleksander could be just what you were looking for! In these tutorials, Nikolai will take us through several step-by-step guides to creating various realistic facial features - finishing this month with how to create a portrait.

Interested? Read on to find out more!



the humanface

part three - portrait

Created In:

Adobe Photoshop

In this third, and last, instalment of the series I'll be showing you how to tie all the previously learned things together and create a simple yet striking portrait.

As we've already covered the question of "how to" in regards to all the facial features, I will not explain again how to paint them, and will only brush over blending and layering colours.

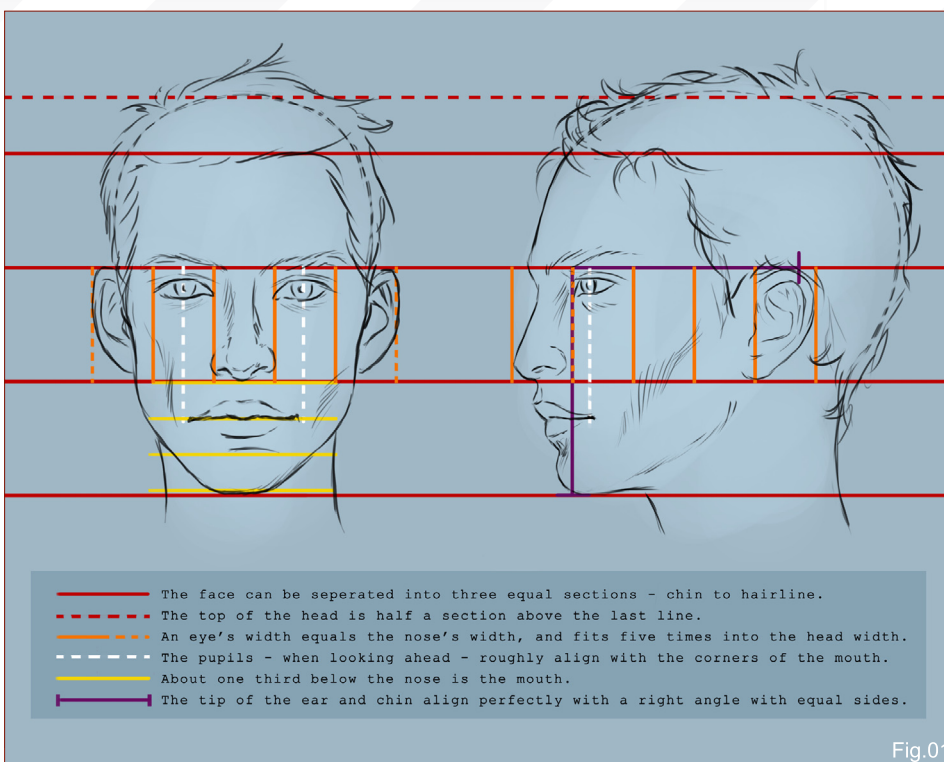


Fig.01

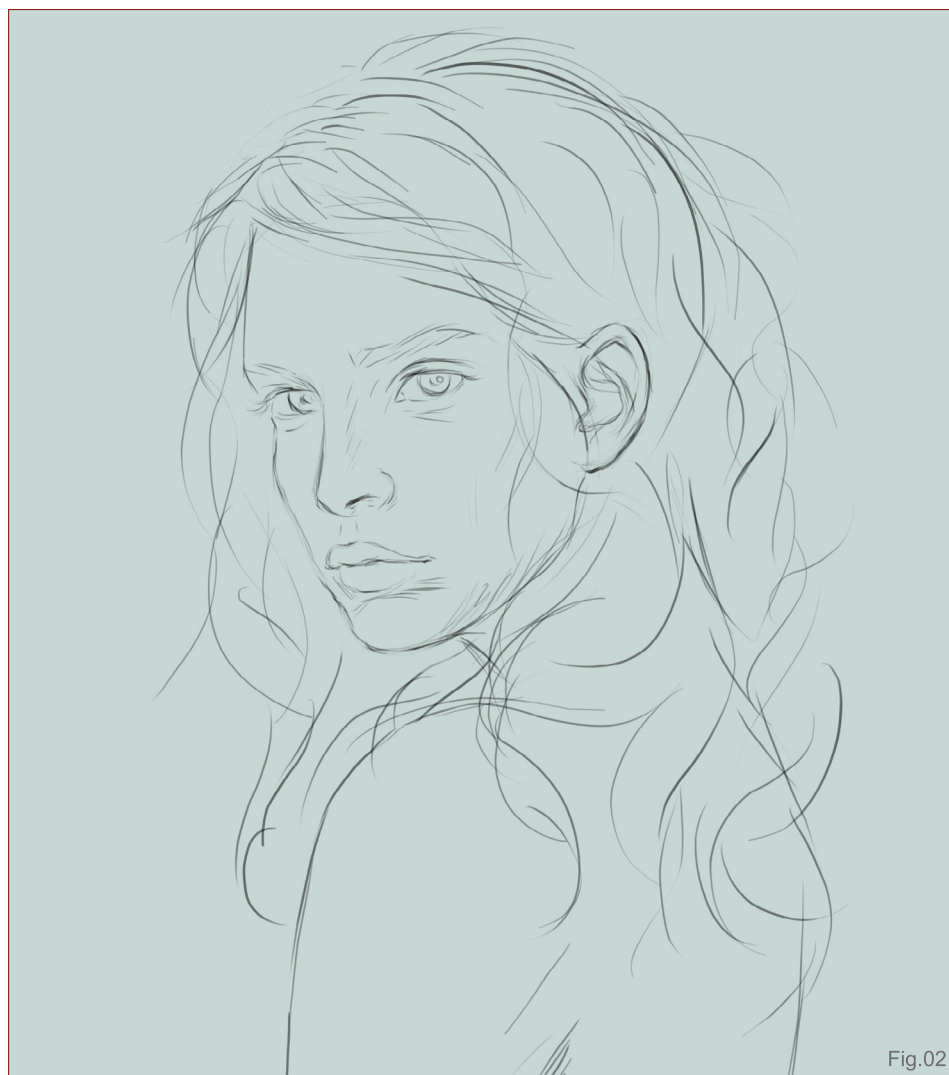


Fig.02

Rather, I will guide you through the steps of building up a portrait from sketch to finish, paying closer attention to how to paint hair, a tattoo, and some other bits and pieces that can make a big difference to the overall outcome of a picture. In essence, this tutorial will show you how I paint portraits, and you can stick as closely or loosely to it as you wish, as there are no hard and fast rules for which approach is the best, or what's right or wrong.

Introduction

The human head seems to be a constant source of problems, anatomically speaking, especially when a realistic result is what the artist had in mind. Quite often I see portraits where the ears or hairline are too high on the head, or too low; where the eyes are too far apart, the mouth too small or the nose too long in proportion to the rest of the head. Things can get wacky there. As strange as it seems, the human face can be sectioned into a grid – pretty much like the one used to show the Divine Proportion, or the Golden Ratio. Everything is designed in a specific pattern, a grid, and it always fits perfectly into that grid, no matter what it is. Of course, nature sometimes has its hiccups, and

somebody's features may not adhere exactly to the grid – I know my ears don't – but knowing about it helps, and will serve as a general guide for the right proportions (**Fig.01**).

Let's Paint!

Open a new file, and make it nice and big.

The bigger you make it, the more detail you can put into it later. 2500 pixels either side is really the minimum, especially if you want to print it in high resolution afterwards. Fill your canvas with a neutral colour and add a new layer for the sketch. Pick your default round hard Paintbrush, with Opacity and Size Jitter set to Pen Pressure, and you're ready to start sketching. Use references if you're not that good yet at freehand sketching – in fact I urge you to use references, especially if you are just starting out with painting people, as that way you'll see lots of different features, and learn about angles and proportions by looking at faces, as well as how lighting and shadows affect things. When sketching freehand I tend to do a very scribbly

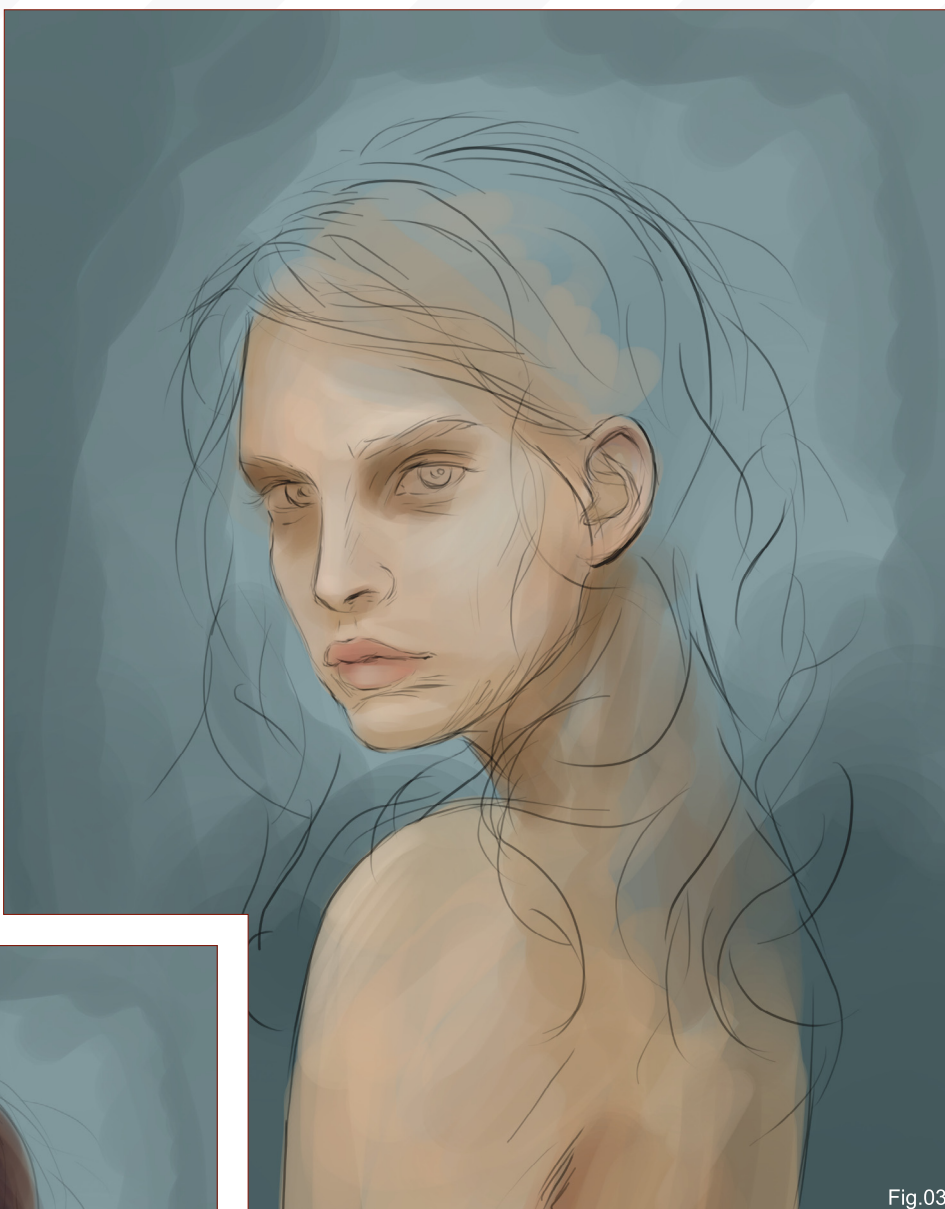


Fig.03

sketch, and when I'm happy with it, I add another layer and draw it again. However, this time I'm going to be a lot less scribbly; I'm just going to draw a few clean lines to give me a very basic line drawing (**Fig.02**).

Now add a new layer beneath the sketch layer and continue with your round Paintbrush, though you may want to switch off the Size Jitter. Block in your character, using a medium skin tone as the base, a slightly lighter one to hint at highlights, a darker one to roughly paint in the shadows, and a slightly more blush tone for the lips and cheeks. At this point you should work out your light source, or it will get messy later. Switch to the background layer and add some more colour there, too. It will give you a better idea of how the skin tones are working with the surroundings you have in mind (**Fig.03**).

Back to your character layer: refine the blocked in colours using a round softer brush; you may want to change the Opacity manually to be able

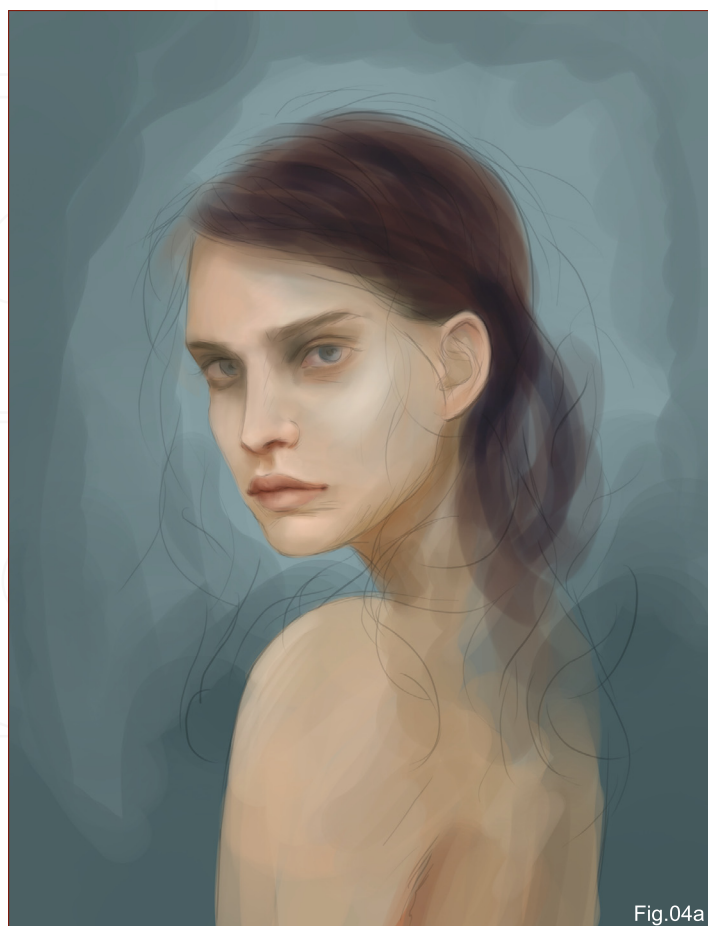


Fig.04a

to layer the colours better while still having the Opacity Jitter switched on. You can blend the colours that way, and also utilise the Smudge Tool, set to Finger Painting with a speckled brush tip. Also, paint in the first hint of hair with just a few strokes, to make it all look a bit more human. You may find it easier to reduce the opacity of the sketch at this point; use it just as a basic guide (**Fig.04a**). Remember that you get better results when you let your brush strokes and smudge strokes follow the curves of the face (**Fig.04b**).

Now comes the point where you can start refining the features, as described in the previous workshops. Flip the canvas every now

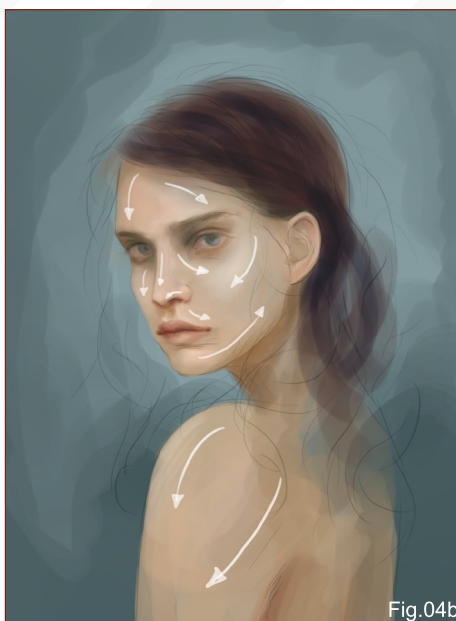


Fig.04b

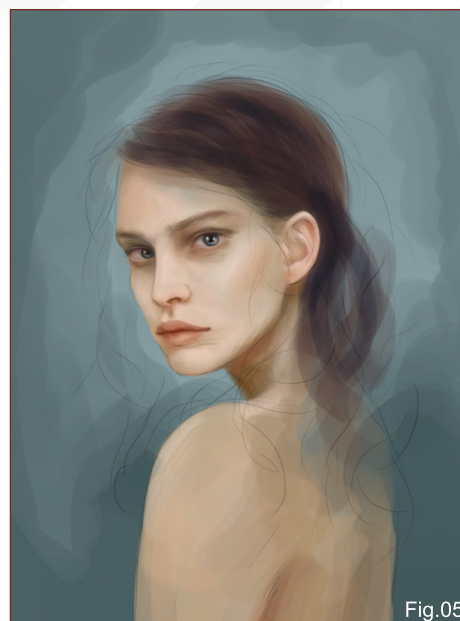


Fig.05



Fig.07

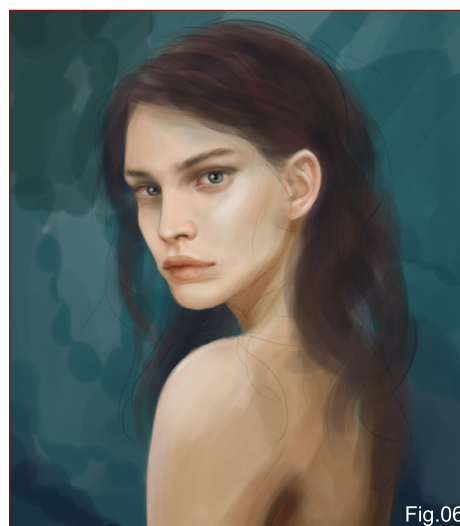


Fig.06

and then to get a fresh view on things and to see mistakes more easily, and fix them. Take your time doing this; it's usually a very slow process, so don't get frustrated when it doesn't look great straight away (**Fig.05**).

To break up the monotony that it can become, I suggest that we work a little more on the background at this point, using much more saturated colours to make the face stand out more. Then go back to the face and keep working on the overall features, adding subtle shadows and highlights where they are needed and softening those shadows and lines that make the portrait look a little too "graphic" – something you won't get completely rid of until the final stages, due to the lack of textures. At

this stage things will still seem to go very slowly, as all you'll be doing is blending, refining, and flipping the canvas.

It's also a good idea to also start painting more of the hair with a shade that you know will be the medium shade of her hair, to see if you really like it as it was in the sketch. As you can see, I am still using the basic round brush for this, which gives me a good base to work off in the next step (Fig.06).

Laying down the hair instantly gives your portrait a new dimension. Pick a speckled brush with Spacing set to 2-5%, Opacity Jitter to Pen Pressure, and Size Jitter switched off. It's important to remember that when painting hair, you will not really paint every single hair. Think of it as strands and those strands make up the hairstyle. As you already have the base of the hair, choose a lighter shade for some highlights, and paint in some strands. In this case I want her to have unruly hair, so the strands won't be smooth at all, and almost look like dreadlocks. For the hair that comes



Fig.08



Fig.09

out behind her face, add a new layer beneath the portrait – it's much easier to paint that way, as you won't have to worry about painting over anything. Also, continue to work on the face, smoothing it out and really paying attention to details that you want to stand out, and refine her upper body (Fig.07).

We can now concentrate on the hair. Pick your speckled brush again, but manually reduce its size a little to get finer strands. Here the fun starts: you can add a new layer and paint part of the hair on it, then blur it slightly using either the Gaussian Blur Filter (use with care!), the Median Filter, or smudging it slightly to soften it here and there. Add more layers and paint layers of strands on them, refining your hair. There really is no fast lane trick for this; each strand is painted and more or less refined. Use some of the background colours in your hair "reflections", as well as the skin colour, as it ties everything together nicely. Dark hair is often easier to paint than light hair, and when painting dark hair you also get away with just adding a few well-placed highlights in an otherwise one-tone block of

hair. There is absolutely no need – even for light hair – to paint every single strand in fine detail. Choosing to detail one focal strand of hair is enough to create the illusion of realistic hair (**Fig.08**).

Continue working on the hair, bringing out the detail. You can add more layers as you go along, but you may also want to merge layers that you're done with, to reduce the size of your painting. Switch from the speckled brush to a round brush with a ragged edge, and set the Size Jitter and Opacity to Pen Pressure for some stray hairs here and there that do not conform to the flow of the strands. I mainly used some of the skin colours for the strong highlights where the light hits it directly, while still retaining some of the dark turquoise tones towards the back of the head and hair, where it comes into contact with the background and a possible secondary light source. Gently softening some of the flyaway hairs with the Smudge Tool helps a great deal to make it look realistic (**Fig.09**).

When you're happy with the hair, it's time to focus on the eyebrows and eyelashes, using the technique I explained in the first part of this series. Also enhance the shadows around the eyes and the shadow side of the face, adding a little bit of the background colour to the skin (**Fig.10**).

The painting looks pretty good already, but we're far from done. It's still quite bare, which can be nice, but also a bit boring. If you're painting fictional characters, like I am in this case, it's good if you know their story – be it just in your own head. This helps you determine what you can add into a portrait, something to outwardly show their personality, something to tell their story to the viewer. I want her to have a tattoo of a water serpent, coiling over and around her shoulder: a statement, not a fashion accessory. To start with that, add a new layer and sketch the serpent, bearing in mind the curve of her shoulder and arm. You don't want the tattoo to look projected onto her skin – it should be part of it (**Fig.11a**). Once you've got that, add another new layer, and using the round Paintbrush with Opacity set to Pen Pressure and Opacity Jitter switched off, draw the clean outlines. Take your time with this; you want it to



Fig.10

be as clean as possible, as it will be the “inked” outline of her tattoo (**Fig.11b**).

To colour the tattoo, add a new layer beneath the tattoo sketch. Choose a colour that works with your painting as the base colour; I picked one from the background. Using the round brush simply paint the dragon in one flat colour without any transparency, then lock the Transparent Pixels in the Layers Palette – it’s the chequered button at the top left of your Layers Palette. What it does is ... exactly what it says on the box: it locks all the pixels that have nothing on them, which makes it very easy to just paint on those things you’ve already painted, without going over the edges (**Fig.12**).



Fig.11a

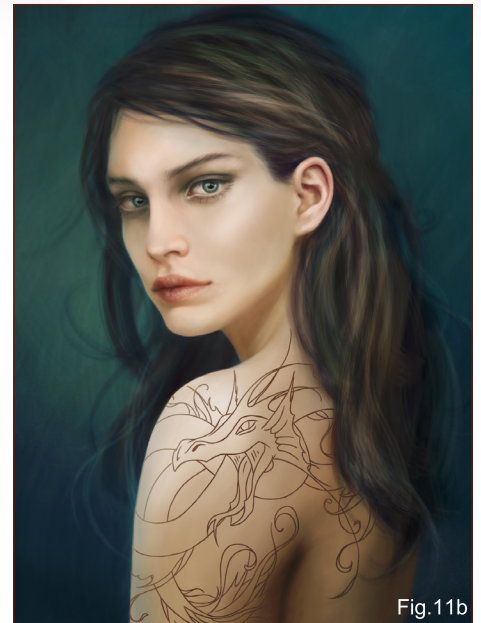


Fig.11b



Fig.13



Fig.12

Picking more colours from the background and the character’s eyes, paint the dragon. For the tongue I picked colours from the girl’s lips. Use your usual brushes for this, as well as the speckled Smudge Tool. Be as realistic or as cartoony as you like here, it’s a tattoo after all (**Fig.13**).

We want the tattoo to be part of the skin, rather than look like body paint, so switch the layer to Overlay. This will cause it to look very bright, so an adjustment of the Levels is needed, and utilising the Variations is also quite useful. Duplicating the layer and setting it to Soft light will add more colour intensity and depth to it.



Fig.14a



Fig.14b

You can adjust the Opacity as you see fit – here it is 65% for the Overlay layer, and 100% for Soft light (**Fig.14a**). It already looks pretty decent, but still too smooth, so let's add some texture. We can do this by duplicating the colour layer, locking Transparent Pixels, and filling it with white. Then add texture (you can use a photo texture, or a textured brush) in a dark colour, and unlock the Transparent Pixels again. Setting the layer to Multiply will let it blend in, and reducing the Opacity also works well here. As a finishing touch, add a light shadow around the outlines of the tattoo – not so much as to actually see it as a shadow, but enough to really make it look like its part of the skin (**Fig.14b**). You can also adjust the levels of the figure slightly to make the colours a tad more striking, then add more shadow at her back, and a blue tinge at the front. Add some more subtle shadows on the face and refine the right eye a little more to finish things off.

Now that the tattoo is done – bar some gentle blurring that will happen later to make it blend in with the figure even little better – look over the portrait and try to see if something is missing. It's always good to step away for a little while at this stage, if you're unsure where to go with it. In this case, the tattoo almost overpowers the face, which is something you do not want unless your painting is about the tattoo. So we need to look at doing something about that. The best thing here is to add a really vibrant, complementary colour to the top part of the piece: a mix of orange and red. This not only draws the focus back onto the face, but complements the red tones used in the tattoo and the girl's lips. Any other colour would



Fig.15

blend in too much with the rest of the painting, or would simply look out of place. So let's give her a hair band, on a new layer, choosing a nice, vibrant, warm orange (Fig.15).

Before working properly on the hair band, I decided that I wanted to change the composition to a bigger canvas with horizontal orientation. It gives the character more space, and I have a plan for that space. So once we've re-sized the canvas, work on the background colours to fill everything in. Then let the hair band become a headscarf, to bring some movement into the picture, and also to aid the composition. Of course, if the scarf is flowing like this, the hair has to as well, or so the rules of physics dictate (Fig.16a). Work on the scarf and flying strands of hair. As the hair is moving, we don't need to detail it as much as before, and can even paint over most of what we've previously done. The scarf has to get a "motion blur", and indeed, this is most easily achieved with the Motion Blur filter. However, be careful with it. Never rely fully



on a filter; if you use one, always touch up the result by hand. We also want the tattoo to look slightly more part of the skin, so blur the outlines using the Blur Tool, especially where it vanishes under the hair, and wraps around her arm and shoulder. You will also notice that I added some backlight to the hair (Fig.16b).

It already looks pretty much finished at this point, and if you wanted, you could leave it as it is. I'm a bit of a perfectionist though, so it's time for the finishing touches: textures. Add a new layer and select a textured brush with Opacity Jitter switched off and Angle Jitter set to 50%; this will make it look less tiled. Choose a very





Fig.17

light colour – a light warm yellow works usually best for warm results – and stamp the texture onto the figure. Erase all the bits that go over the edges with a soft round brush. Set the layer to Overlay and change the Opacity to something you're happy with. Erase more as and where needed. Repeat this with a dark colour on another new layer. You can add freckles and other skin markings in the same way. I've also added a bit of a glow on her cheek, brow, forehead, jaw line and nose with a speckled brush as described in the first part of this series (Fig.17).

Looking it over, it seems that the scarf really needs something more, such as some brocade. So, for those of you who won't take "Paint brocade and be done with it" for an answer, here's how to do that:

Open a new file big enough in relation to the portrait, add a new layer and draw the brocade pattern using a round brush with Opacity and Size Jitter set to Pen Pressure (Fig.18a).

Transfer this onto the scarf, then duplicate and turn the layer repeatedly, moving it around on the scarf to get a covering pattern. Erase the bits going over the edges, and also where



Fig.18

the fabric folds over. If you do not pay attention to this, it will look badly pasted. Deform the pattern where needed to match the curve of the fabric – either by using the Free Transform Tool, or the Liquify Filter using the Forward Warp Tool. Once that is done, apply the Median Filter to soften the pattern a bit, or Gaussian Blur. Again, be careful with this, as you only want the pattern to look part of the fabric, not wash it out. Also, apply a Motion Blur to those parts of pattern that need it; if the scarf is moving and blurred, the patterns has to be, too (**Fig.18b**).

If this is still not enough texture for you, or you want to really go grunge, overlay a photo texture and play around with the opacity setting. Overlay or Soft light often work best. And as a last step, if you want to boost the colours, adjust the Levels slightly, and maybe even play with the Variations to give it an overall different hue. And your portrait is done! (**Fig.19**)

Some Final Words...

It still amazes me just how much time you can spend on a portrait, by paying endless attention to the tiniest details. However, over the years I've found that too much detail can often ruin a painting – it can start to look static, lifeless and forced. So let go every now and then. Don't fill in all the blanks. Give the viewer something to exercise their imagination.



Fig.18a

Even when you do not go down the minimalist path, and love lots of embellishment and complicated hair-dos, the rule of thumb still stands: less is more. This shouldn't be an excuse for sloppiness though, as even hinted-at things need some thought and a little attention.

Now go grab my custom brushes and get painting. Enjoy!



Fig.18b

Nykolai Aleksander

For more from this artist visit:

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ALEX OLIVER

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“One of the main tasks in this piece was to stylise the image of the girl, in order to give her a tender and pictorial look - I didn't want the piece to be just another picture made from her photo.”

Alexander Yazynin
shares how he created
this image by using
both Painter and
Photoshop.



Nastya

Making of by Alexander Yazynin

Making of Nastya

Created In:

Painter

Introduction

Hello everyone, I'm Alexander Yazynin and I'm an art director at Katauri Interactive, which has recently been working on *King's Bounty: The Legend* game. The image I'm going to discuss in this article, however, is not part of my job, as you might have already guessed.

I came up with the idea for this piece as an unusual birthday present for a girl that I liked, who I went to school with as a child. Twelve years later, we happened to meet up again when we became neighbours - which was a pleasant surprise for me! Unfortunately it didn't stay that way for long; I recently moved to the far side of my country, from native Vladivostok

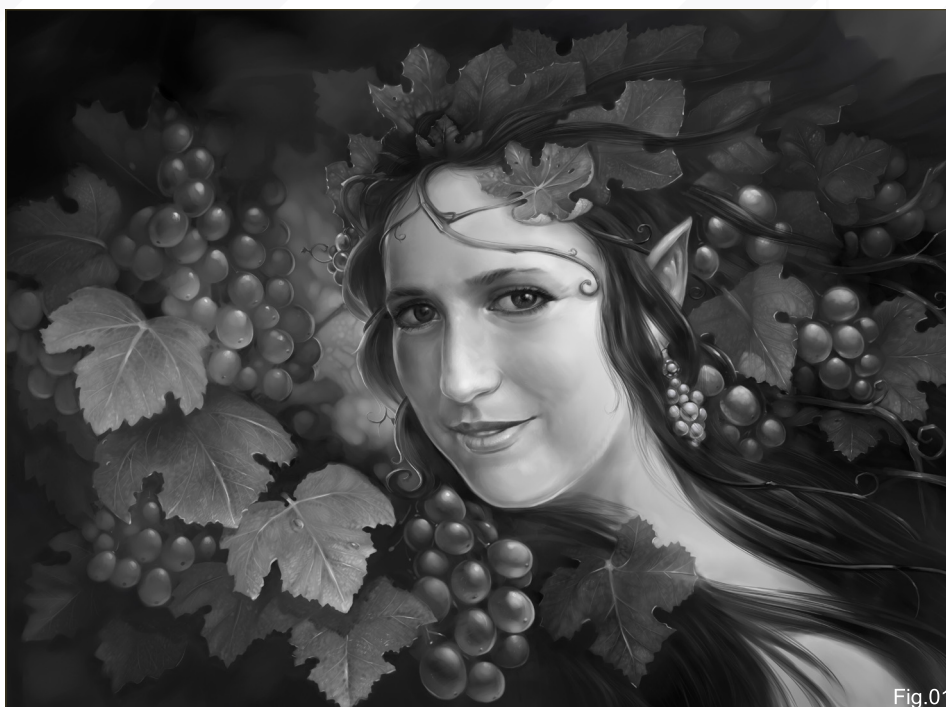


Fig.01

to Kaliningrad (the time zones are eight hours apart). Being so far away from her, I wanted to surprise her with something that I'd made myself, which could be sent to her by e-mail.

Preparation

The main idea for this piece was to convey a slightly altered image of a real person into an old stylised painting, whilst keeping the character recognisable. Unfortunately, the photos that I

had of her were very small and of poor quality, but even so I managed to choose a good angle from them.

Sketching

The first sketch was just to fix the idea and composition; it was simply three by four centimetres in size and consisted of a few rough lines. Once I had defined the environment in which I wanted to place her, and what the composition would be, I started to make the basic composition and work on the tonal values by placing concise spots on the canvas. It was basically a spontaneous process – all done on one layer (Fig.01).

All of the work in the black-and-white stage was done in Painter Classic, which was distributed with my tablet. I used only one round brush, just changing its size and transparency. Almost all of the black-and-white work was completed in just one session – because it was so exciting! Over the following several evenings I finalised the details in black-and-white.

One of the main tasks in this piece was to stylise the image of the girl, in order to give her a tender and pictorial look - I didn't want the piece

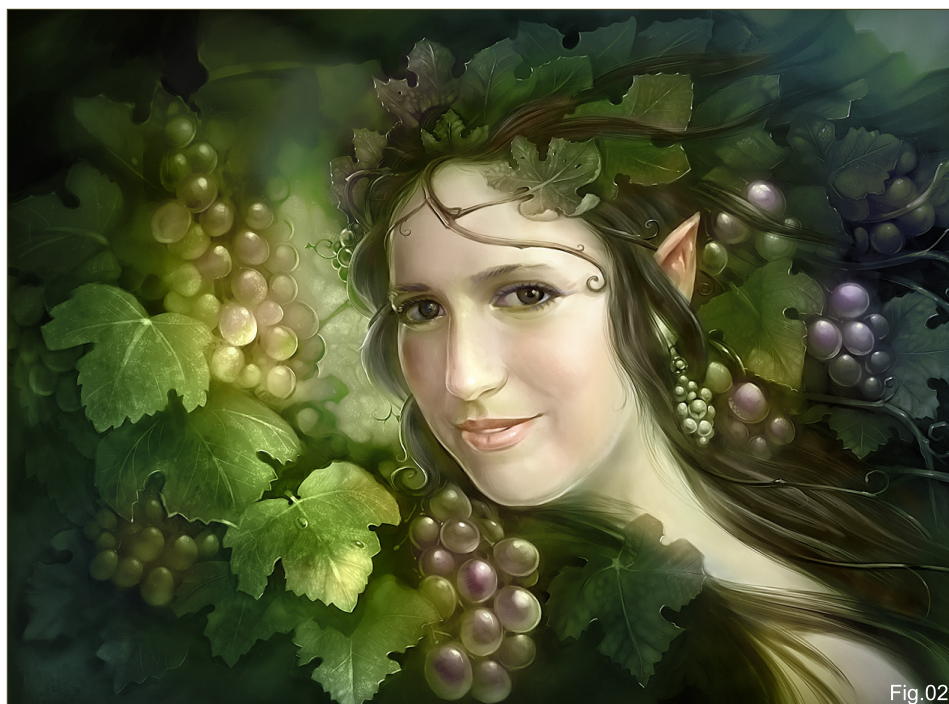


Fig.02

to be just another picture made from her photo. For this task, I removed irrelevant realistic anatomical details, made her eyes bigger, added some soft lighting, and blended her in with the environment. My first priority was her eyes; if they looked slightly odd then the image of her would have been ruined! She had to be able to recognise herself.

The grapes were painted simply from my imagination, and from my idea of how they should look in a painting. For the accuracy of the leaves' shapes, I referred to images, but it was



Fig.04



Fig.03

not necessary to make them look too realistic – the main point was to create a beautiful, fantasy style environment with a feeling of depth.

Colours

I started working on the colours next, in Photoshop. I planned to make the final version desktop sized, so I reduced the grayscale version from 4000 by 3000 pixels to 1280 by 960, and continued working in this resolution.

To add colour, I used a large, soft brush and layers with Colour, Softlight and Overlay properties. At first I was just looking for a basic colour theme; I put a cold green colour on top of the entire picture. I then added warm colours in the centre, on the face, and on the leaves with the grapes (**Fig.02**).

When the basic colours were all in place I started searching for more interesting variations with Hue/Saturation, Replace Colour and Curves (**Fig.03**). When I was satisfied, I merged the layers and created new ones – to make the colours even more varied – and worked more closely on the defining parts of the picture. When I was happy with the colours I started adding final details and increasing the complexity of the texture of the face, leaves and grapes using a small brush in Scattering mode. I later added water drops on leaves – and a bug as a final touch (**Fig.04**).

Thank you for reading. I hope it has been useful!

Alexander Yazynin

For more details about this artist please contact:
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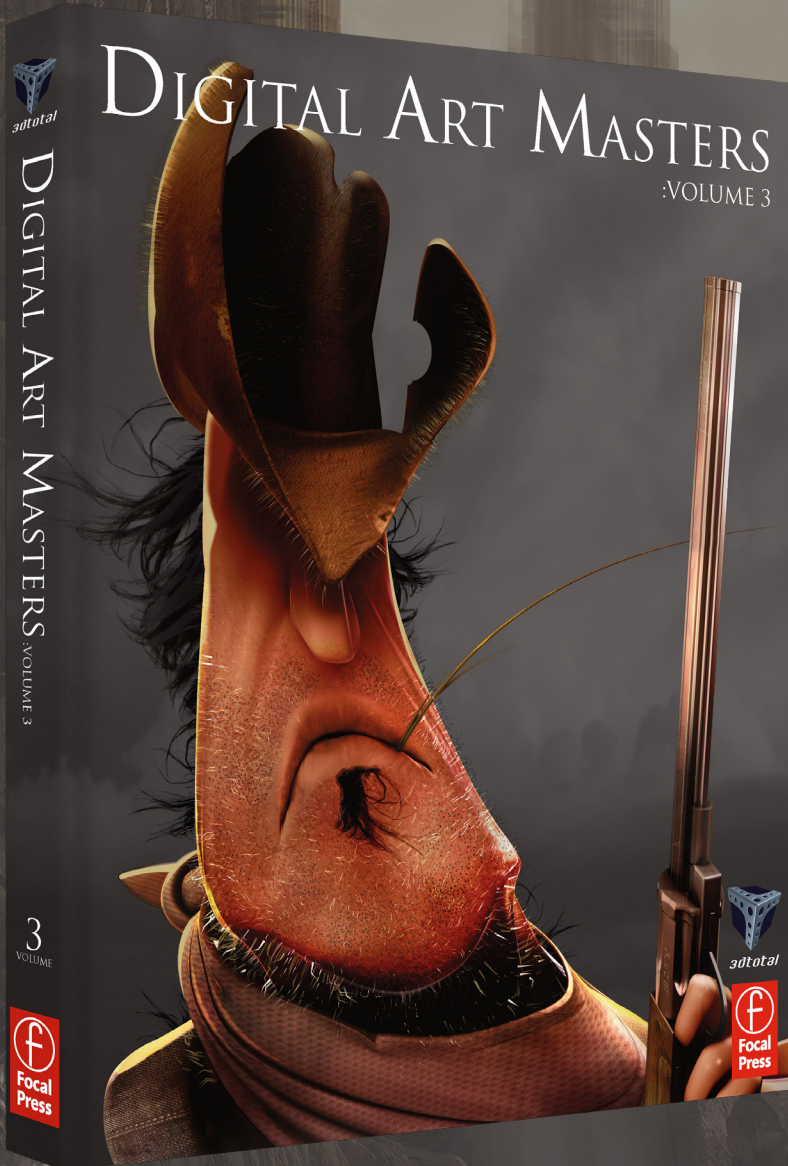
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This month we feature:

"Palace Entrance"
by James Paick





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PALACE ENTRANCE

BY JAMES PAICK



INTRODUCTION

After a long hiatus from working on personal projects, I finally had an opportunity to take some time to create something solely for myself. The first thought that came to mind was the idea of playing with reality, almost pushing it into the realm of fantasy. My focus was to create a dramatic environment within an epic scale, rooted in a mysterious culture. I definitely wanted a powerful, serious image that could draw in an audience.

PROCESS

With the general idea in place, I sat down to sketch whatever came to mind. I always like to start in a fast and loose fashion that allows for big gestural strokes to establish the composition. I tend to push around lines and paints until I start to see something interesting and unique.

At first, I started with laying out my hierarchy – small, medium, large areas (Fig.01). My sketch started off very – very loose! After just a few strokes, I could already start to see a very striking composition that captured my attention (Fig.02). At this point, I already wanted to address any uncomfortable spacing or tangencies. Also, although it was still rough, the thumbnail already showed me a palette range of warm and cool colors that could be useful in developing my layout further. I continued using textured and round brushes to give me random shapes to help me find "happy accidents". I felt this was a good start and could easily build on top of this.



Fig.01



Fig.02



Fig.03

FANTASY

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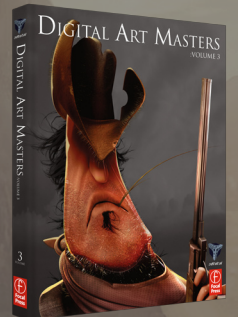
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The thought of a monolithic palace tower entered at this point. I decided that this would be the driving force of this culture. With the general composition in place, I started to refine my sketch to figure out what was really going on in the painting. I wanted to pursue the relationship of warm and cool colors, keeping that throughout the piece. I wanted to keep elements in the foreground in a cool and lower value. This helped to create a vignette to keep the focal point centralized. This then helped to establish scale (see Fig.02).

Establishing the scale, lighting and composition are all very tricky tasks, but are so rewarding when done right! I had a piercing three-legged tower in the background and I repeated the shape in the foreground to help establish the scale (kind of how a walkway bridge helps with scale when rails are repeated), as well as painted in smaller details. Within each major plain, foreground, middle ground, and background, I started to push the palette and values. In the sky, I established a dominant light source. The mountains in the background got a treatment of subtle values to reinforce the light source in the sky.



Fig.04



Fig.04

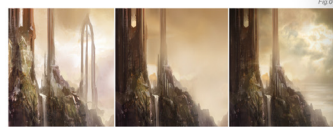


Fig.05

I continued to push the warm versus cool relationship in the middle and foreground. Keeping the bottom of the piece in a dark, cool tone created the contrasting mood.

Lighting was a key factor in making this an epic piece. I definitely wanted a backlit effect so the silhouette would be the initial read. To make this a compelling image, I wanted to push the palette range so that the immediate focal areas were in light. Keeping saturation within the lit areas was important to reinforce the lighting. This helped to direct the viewer where I wanted them to look.

About halfway through, I flipped my composition horizontally to check the balance of the piece, and found it more interesting in the new layout. I decided to keep it this way. I started to carve into the piece, creating the staging ground to be the main focal point. This was to be the main entrance to the great palace. To establish this area, I painted with Color Dodge and Overlays to push the palette and values without sacrificing any of the details or drawings (Fig.03).

Having a good reference library of images is very important for any artist (Fig.04). Generally, when needed, I use images in many different ways, such as for lighting references, textures, color palettes, and so on. In this case, I wanted to use photography to help to give it a matte piece finish of detail and believability.

Bringing in a photo texture can be a tricky thing. I tend to backtrack a little and allow the photography to describe the shape as much as possible. Using what I had already established in the piece in terms of form, shape and lighting, I painted over my initial piece to give it more of a flat, less textured layer (Fig.05). Using bits of photos and painting on top, I created a sky that supported the design and used it as a communication tool. I definitely did not want to texture everything – just the parts I wanted to read as focal points (Fig.06).

At this point, I was ready to give attention to the details of this piece. I only wanted to give details to the parts I wanted the viewer to read. Even so, small details here and there, even in non-focal areas, helped to really tell the story and to sell the concept. I added figures to reinforce the scale and refine color saturations where necessary. I added "hide and go seek" elements throughout the piece to keep the viewer interested, such as a flock of birds and details on the entrance door (Fig.07).

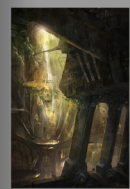
CONCLUSION

I had a lot of fun with this piece! I really feel that I met the criteria I gave myself at the beginning. I feel it tells a story, and it is definitely dramatic and mysterious. Looking back on the piece, I am happy with the hard work and effort that came from this painting. My process of working big to small, loose to detailed, helps to carry me on an unknown journey. I tend to visualize the outcome more towards the middle-end of the process. Of course, there is no set way or working, and everyone has his or her own method, but this way has helped me to grow as an artist.



Fig.07

ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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